

California EDUCATOR

California Teachers Association November 2010 Volume 15 Issue 3

Facing autism

A growing challenge
for our school system
page 8

Big election wins

page 26

Teaching culturally
sensitive **holidays**
page 20

*"People are always looking
for the single magic bullet
that will totally change
everything. There is no single
magic bullet."*

Temple Grandin

What will you leave undone?

No one knows what the future will bring. The important thing is that you and your loved ones are ready and protected with reliable Disability and Life Insurance should the unexpected occur along the way. Wherever your life's path leads, don't leave good protection behind. Standard Insurance Company offers the only CTA-endorsed Disability and Life Insurance coverage, so you know you'll have a more secure journey.

Visit MyCTA at www.cta.org or call us at 800.522.0406 (TTY) to find out how The Standard can protect what's important to you.



For costs and further details of the coverage, including exclusions, any reductions or limitations and the terms under which the policy may be continued in force, please contact Standard Insurance Company at 800.522.0406 (TTY).

Standard Insurance Company, 1100 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204

GP 190-LTD/S399/CTA.1
GP 190-LIFE/S399/CTA.3
SI 14173-CTAv01



FEATURES

8 Facing autism

- 10 Going mainstream in Carlsbad
- 16 Teaching students with autism
- 16 The puzzle of autism
- 18 Early intervention
- 19 Added Authorization in Special Education

20 Teaching culturally sensitive holidays

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- 22 Film sparks discussion of school reform in Vacaville
- 23 GLBT Conference: Perspectives of participants
- 24 New iPads help Tahoe-Truckee leaders communicate
- 26 2010 big election wins



On the cover: Lisa MacFarland works with Hunter, a student with autism, in a social skills class at Hayes Elementary School in San Jose. Story on page 8.

ACTION

- 30 Voter turnout key to election wins, says Sanchez
- 31 CTA, coalition will continue to urge newly elected officials to protect public education
- 32 How will the new Common Core State Standards impact teachers?
- 34 Heads up: Conferences and deadlines
- 35 CTAinvest.org helps members be good investors
- 38 Jonestown survivor found healing through teaching





¡Sí Se Puede! ¿Por Qué No?

BY CTA PRESIDENT DAVID A. SANCHEZ

What an exciting election year this has been for all of us! With the help of CTA's incredibly motivated members, pro-education candidates and measures won huge victories at the November polls, creating a change in favor of education.

We will certainly experience more tough times ahead, but now we have good, supportive people on our side. Governor-elect Jerry Brown knows it is important to include educators, parents and local leaders in discussions about reform that will affect the schools in their communities. We have not always agreed with him on everything, but Jerry Brown has been a governor and public official we can talk to and work with. He respects the work educators do to make our schools the best they can be.

Tom Torlakson will continue to be a positive influence on behalf of educators and an advocate for public schools with the public and with the Legislature. He has also been a strong advocate for parental involvement in the schools and recognizes it as critical to improving student achievement. As superintendent of public instruction, Torlakson will use his office to protect education funding and fight for our students.

Another change in favor of public education and reforming our state budget mess is the approval of Proposition 25, the On-Time Budget Act. Enabling the Legislature to pass a budget with a simple majority — rather than the two-thirds vote that had been required — will mean less chance of legislative gridlock and greater likelihood that the budget will be delivered on time. Prop. 25 holds legislators accountable if they fail to pass the budget on time, and for every day the budget is late, lawmakers will be docked a day's pay. No budget, no pay — and no payback later. This alone will be the biggest win in helping educators to plan effectively for school budgets.

Your involvement and voice made all of this happen. CTA members came out across the state, placing thousands of phone-banking calls and showing up at the polls. Now we need to channel the momentum we've created into the fight for proper funding in the classroom.

The new governor and Legislature will face the state's abysmal budget deficit, which the Legislative Analyst's Office has recently projected to be a \$25 billion shortfall by the 2011-12 budget

year. As they begin their work, officials will continue to hear from CTA and educators around the state, reminding them of the devastating effects that the previous cuts, already exceeding \$21 billion in three years, have had on California classrooms. It will be important for all of us to remain engaged and focused on what's happening in Sacramento, and to tell the stories of our local schools.

There is talk of a special legislative session being called for Dec. 6 by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to address the deficit of about \$6.1 billion in the current budget year. The good news is that newly elected officials responsible for balancing the budget in the long term understand our schools have already been cut too much. The bad news is that the deficit numbers are so tremendous that the Legislature needs to look at drastic measures to fix the shortfall and create additional revenues.

Unfortunately, voters did not pass CTA-sponsored Proposition 24, which would have rolled back more than \$1.3 billion in corporate tax breaks that are scheduled to begin next year. Their refusal to eliminate the \$1.3 billion in corporate giveaways will leave legislators scrambling to find ways to reduce state spending by a similar amount. The passage of Proposition 26, which requires a two-thirds vote to approve fees and makes it more difficult for the state to increase revenues, also causes new problems for lawmakers.

While we face many challenges ahead, we can all look at the progress we've made this year as a terrific accomplishment. Later this month CTA will host a symposium on QEIA (the Quality Education Investment Act) to discuss how we are leading reforms, showing preliminary results of the success of the program.

I'm so proud of each and every one of you for your hard work on behalf of our schools and students and the future of public education. Let's keep that momentum going. Let's not stop until we have a public school system that all Californians can be truly proud of.

California EDUCATOR

EDITOR IN CHIEF Dave Earl Carpenter
STAFF WRITER Sherry Posnick-Goodwin
CTA WEB EDITOR Karyn Ferrera Donhoff
CTA WEB EDITOR Tiffany Hasker
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Craig Hamilton

CTA ELECTED OFFICERS
PRESIDENT David A. Sanchez
VICE PRESIDENT Dean E. Vogel
SECRETARY-TREASURER Gail M. Mendes

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Larry Allen, E. Toby Boyd, Donald L. Bridge, Tyrone V. Cabell, Mikki Cichocki, Elana Davidson, Don Dawson, Dana Dillon, David Goldberg, Jim Groth, Dián Dolores Hasson, Eric C. Heins, Marty G. Meeden, George Melendez, Theresa Montañó, Mary Rose Ortega, Cynthia Peña, Jim Rogers, Bonnie Shatun, Marc Sternberger, Michael Stone, Curtis Washington

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Carolyn Doggett
ASSOCIATE EXEC. DIRECTOR Rebecca Zoglmann
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER Jonathan Goldman

CONTRIBUTORS
Scott Buschman, Dave Crosland, Len Feldman, Bill Guy, Carole Anne Luckenbach, Dina Martin, Mike Myslinski, Kamran Nasser

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
Katie Young, chair; Ami S. Barker, Misao Brown, Rosalyn Collier, Tony P. Diaz, Michael Downey, Linda Guthrie, Gregg Solkovits, Sandra Thornton, KC Walsh; Jim Groth (Board liaison)

EDITORIAL INFORMATION
California Educator is published for the information and edification of its members. The editorial philosophy is governed by the policies of CTA. Articles and advertising reflect that philosophy.

Letters to the editor may be sent to editor@cta.org.

Publication of advertising in the *California Educator* does not indicate CTA approval of the product or of the companies that purchase advertising.

Advertising rate card and information is available from WebSolutions, Media Division, 5666 Spruce Harbor Court, Las Vegas, NV 89122 (702) 838-3434; FAX (702) 838-3355

CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year, Sept. 1-Aug. 31, are \$783, including a \$20 voluntary contribution. Up to \$17.97 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives and is not deductible for income tax purposes.

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

California Educator (ISSN 1091-6148) is published monthly except January, July and August for \$6.17 per year (included in dues) by:

CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION
1705 Murchison Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010-4583
(650) 697-1400; FAX (650) 552-5002
editor@cta.org, www.cta.org

Postmaster: Send change of address to
California Educator, P.O. Box 4178,
Burlingame, CA 94011-4178.

Periodicals Postage Paid at Burlingame, CA,
and additional mailing offices.

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



what's new at CTA.ORG



Retirees and prospective retirees take notice

Protect Social Security and fight for Social Security fairness by calling on Congress and the National Committee on Fiscal Responsibility & Reform to repeal the Government Pension Offset (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).
www.cta.org/socialsecurity



Day of the Special Educator: Dec. 3

The state Legislature has proclaimed December 3 as "Day of the Special Educator." Californians are urged to recognize the dedication and hard work of special educators on this day and year round.
www.cta.org/specialed



November is American Indian Heritage Month

In honor of American Indians, review our resources, including the Jim Clark American Indian/Alaska Native Human Rights Award, whereby a CTA member whose activities have helped to achieve significant progress on behalf of equal opportunity for American Indians/Alaska Natives, may be nominated.
www.cta.org/heritage

For additional Educator content, look for our web exclusives at cta.org

Create a cartoon concept

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

address: California Educator Magazine
 CTA Communications
 1705 Murchison Drive
 Burlingame, CA 94010-4583

e-mail: editor@cta.org **fax:** (650) 552-5002



Dave Crosland, hiredmeat@gmail.com

LETTERS

TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,
I retired from teaching high school in June and I am so tired of all of this teacher bashing. I agree with Sherry Posnick-Goodwin's article "The blame game" in the October *Educator* that the majority of teachers are dedicated to their students and their craft. I think the real problem lies in the apathy of most of the students. When so many students are only concerned with their appearance, their iPods and their cell phones, it doesn't matter how good the teachers are.

Karin Holman
Liberty Education Association



Dear Editor,
Thank you for your article on "The blame game" in the October 2010 *California Educator*. The challenge we face is making sure everyone in our state understands the complexity of the issues in public education, and that we call out the lazy journalism and political plans. We need to insist that arguments about education are built on logic and valid research, and that the demands for academic rigor don't exist only within the classroom. You don't earn an A just because you write in all caps, and we don't teach our students that the best response

to a difficult question can be fit into a 30-second sound-bite.

Steve Schessler
Gavilan College Faculty Association



Send us your comments

Letters to the editor regarding stories appearing in *California Educator* may be sent via mail, fax or e-mail.

address: California Educator Magazine
CTA Communications
1705 Murchison Drive
Burlingame, CA 94010-4583

fax: (650) 552-5002

e-mail: editor@cta.org

UPDATE

Parents' banner praises 'super' teachers at Woodside High

In a public show of support for teachers at a San Mateo County school portrayed negatively in the flawed documentary *Waiting for Superman* (see "The blame game" in the October *Educator*), parents at Woodside High School unfurled a huge banner in October that praises educators. The defiant banner reads: "Woodside High School Teachers — Man, You're Super! Thank you for teaching ALL the students in our community!" It's prominently displayed on a fence in front of the campus and easily seen by drivers who pass by.

Woodside High parent Anne Kopf-Sill organized the push for donations for the banner, designed by parent Amber Ramies. Kopf-Sill was concerned with all the negative national publicity for the school generated by the emotional film, which

follows five students who want to get into charter schools and hope to be selected in public lotteries. One of the students, fearful of going to Woodside High, ends up being picked to enter a nearby charter.

Kopf-Sill is not opposed to charters; she's upset at the way the film slights the diverse school her two sons attend and fails to stress that public schools accept all students. "I wanted to do something," she says of her need to respond in a public way. "My children have great teachers at Woodside."

She joined other parents in pushing a coffee cart through the halls of the school, providing free java for educators as a show of gratitude. The banner and the coffee were much appreciated, says Woodside High teacher Gregory Gruszynski, who is president of the Sequoia District Teachers



ABOVE: Woodside High teacher Gregory Gruszynski, left, says teachers greatly appreciate the banner effort launched by parent Anne Kopf-Sill.

Association, representing educators in the Sequoia Union High School District.

"Teachers really appreciated the message," Gruszynski says of the banner. "I think every teacher here is very proud to be teaching at this school."

calendar

nov 2010	<input type="checkbox"/> Nov. 14-20 <input type="checkbox"/> Nov. 30	American Education Week QEIA symposium, Sacramento
dec 2010	<input type="checkbox"/> Dec. 2-4 <input type="checkbox"/> Dec. 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Dec. 8-9	CLMS/CLHS Annual Conference South, San Diego Day of the Special Educator Secondary Literacy Summit X, Costa Mesa
jan 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 7 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 14 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 14-16 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 21 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 21-23 <input type="checkbox"/> Jan. 28-30	Deadline for Human Rights Award nominations Deadline to enter César E. Chávez Awards program Issues Conference, Las Vegas Deadline for CTA Gold Award nominations Good Teaching Conference, San Jose Region III Leadership Conference, Torrance
feb 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 4 <input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 11-13 <input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 25-26 <input type="checkbox"/> Feb. 25-27	Deadline to apply for CTA Scholarship CTA State Council of Education, Los Angeles CCA Winter Advocacy Council NEA Pacific Region Conference, Portland, OR CLMS/CLHS Annual Conference North, Sacramento
mar 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> March 2 <input type="checkbox"/> March 4 <input type="checkbox"/> March 4-6 <input type="checkbox"/> March 18-20	Read Across America Deadline to apply for MLK Jr. Scholarship Equity and Human Rights Conference, San Jose Good Teaching Conference, Orange County
april 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> April 1-3 <input type="checkbox"/> April 15-17	CTA State Council of Education, Los Angeles CCA Conference/Spring Council and WHO Awards
may 2011	<input type="checkbox"/> May 1-7 <input type="checkbox"/> May 11 <input type="checkbox"/> May 11 <input type="checkbox"/> May 17	Teacher Appreciation Week School Nurses Day California Day of the Teacher CTA ESP Day

Check out the new **interactive digital version of California Educator online!**
Visit us at www.cta.org.



Flip through pages, click links, print stories, e-mail copies to friends and many other great features.

NEA Complimentary Life is the no-cost insurance benefit every member enjoys.

NEA Complimentary Life Insurance®

- Up to \$1,000 life insurance and \$5,000 accidental death and dismemberment coverage
- \$50,000 AD&D insurance for any covered accident that occurs while on the job or serving as an Association Leader
- \$150,000 life insurance for unlawful homicide while on the job

We're devoted to helping every member get adequate coverage affordably. Because it's so important that your family is financially secure, we provide this additional insurance benefit at no cost to all eligible members.

Register your beneficiary now at neamb.com/insurance

NEA Members Insurance Trust®

NEA Complimentary Life Insurance is provided at no cost to all Active, Staff, Reserve and Life members.

CL051110



Dominic, 5, plays with a puzzle at the Central California Autism Center at CSU Fresno.

facing autism

A growing challenge for our school system

“If you break a pencil, is it a huge problem or a small problem?” asks Lisa MacFarland. It’s a question most teachers wouldn’t ask fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade students. But MacFarland’s students have autism, and a broken pencil could trigger a meltdown or a tantrum in her special education classroom at Hayes Elementary School in San Jose. >>>

PAGE 10



Going mainstream in Carlsbad ▶

PAGE 16



Teaching students with autism ▶

PAGE 18



Early intervention ▶

PAGE 19



Added Authorization in Special Education ▶

Stories by Sherry Posnick-Goodwin • Photos by Scott Buschman



LEFT: Tristain at Hayes Elementary School in San Jose.

THERE IS SILENCE, SO MACFARLAND rephrases the question. “Is a broken pencil a big problem so you can’t do work for the rest of the year? Or is it a small problem that you can use strategies to solve?”

“It’s a small problem,” a student named Hunter replies after some consideration. “You could sharpen it or get a new one.”

MacFarland is conducting a lesson on behavioral skills and acceptable ways of interacting with peers. It doesn’t come naturally; children with autism typically have trouble communicating and socializing. She asks her students to demonstrate “expected” behavior that will have positive results (calmly answering questions), and “unexpected” behavior (yelling or name-calling) that is upsetting to others, so they understand the difference between the two. Students also practice recognizing facial expressions and connecting them with emotions.

MacFarland’s students are part of a growing population. In 2009, the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that one in 100 children has autism — a 50

percent increase from 2007, when the government estimated the rate to be one in 150. A study from the National Survey of Children’s Health also concluded that one in 100 children has autism. That is more than triple the 14,000 youngsters with autism at the beginning of the decade, making autism the fastest-rising disability. It’s believed to be one of the most expensive and most challenging disabilities facing public schools today.

Even before the economic crisis hit, the California Department of Education’s Autism Advisory Committee reported that California schools lack a cohesive plan to meet the challenge. The committee’s 2008 report, the most current issued by the state, cites a lack of teachers who are trained to work with children who have autism, funding problems, and “a lack of coherent, universally accepted, effective educational practices” for educating children with autism.

The panel concluded that so many “intensive services” are needed for students that autism threatens to “overwhelm local educational systems.”

The California Legislative Blue Ribbon

Commission on Autism, created in 2005, also issued a dire warning: “The dramatic growth in the number of children affected by autism spectrum disorders now constitutes a public health crisis.”

In 2008 it cost \$36,000 annually to teach each student with autism, compared with \$8,558 for regular education students, according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, which noted that the number of children with autism in public schools is increasing by 19 percent a year. The newspaper also reported that schools in California transferred more than 30 percent of regular education dollars to special education in 2008, compared to 4 percent in 2000, and that “regular education is a virtual ATM card for special education.” The most expensive component for schools is providing one-on-one aides for students with autism.

“The fiscal impact can be especially hard on rural schools,” says Sue Allen, a member of the Middletown Teachers Association who teaches full-inclusion kindergarten at Coyote Valley Elementary School. “It ends up taking a lot of our general funds.”

While numerous bills have been introduced in the Legislature in recent years to deal with the crisis, all have been vetoed by the governor, says Fred Balcom, director of special education for the California Department of Education. “These bills would have supplied funds to get

Going mainstream in

Nate doesn’t like loud noises, Mondays or summer school. The fifth-grader often comments “I don’t like Mondays” in the middle of discussing other subjects. When asked what he *does* like, he enthusiastically describes the bubble gum-scented deodorizer that’s used inside porta-potties.

“Smells like bubble gum,” he says repeatedly.

Nate, 12, has intelligence, good looks and good grades. He also has autism. He and other students on the autism spectrum have been mainstreamed since kindergarten at Pacific Rim Elementary School — and various other school sites in Carlsbad.

It’s a challenge for teachers, but mainstreaming seems to work because Carlsbad Unified Teachers Association members are determined to make it work.

High-functioning students with autism attend regular classrooms throughout most of the day, and also receive services with special education teachers and speech-

better training for teachers and resources to the classroom. Apparently the governor thought it was not all that important.”

Autism needs to be a higher priority in Sacramento, asserts CTA Board member Tyrone Cabell, a special education teacher and member of the Los Angeles County Education Association.

“It’s a challenge that needs to be addressed,” says Cabell, noting that out of 678,105 students in special education, 53,183 are on the autism spectrum. “Schools need more money to help these children — and to help them early, because the earlier you offer intervention, the better they do. We need more money for research to find out why autism is a growing problem. And we need more money to train classroom teachers to work with this challenging student population.”

The truth about autism

Autism is a complex neurological disorder that affects a person’s ability to communicate and interact with others. It is defined by a certain set of behaviors including repeated words or motions, fixation on certain subjects, sensitivity to light and sound, little or no eye contact, and difficulty forming relationships. It is a “spectrum” disorder that affects individuals differently and to differing extents. The condition is four times more likely to occur in



Sue Allen
Middletown Teachers Association

RIGHT: Rachel Thomas, president of the Manhattan Beach Unified Teachers Association, talks about the challenges involved in mainstreaming students with autism.

boys than girls. Some individuals with autism also have mental retardation, while many are extremely bright.

“They might learn very well, but they are not great social learners,” says Peter Mundy, director of educational research at the UC Davis Mind Institute, which is devoted to the research and treatment of autism. “Children with autism have a difficult time paying attention to the right things at the right time when it comes to learning from other people. The biggest misconception is that most of us think children with autism don’t respond well to intervention, but we’re beginning to see that they do respond pretty well to intervention. Many people think of children with autism as flapping their arms or spinning in some corner, which was the prototype in the ’60s or ’70s. Not to say that children don’t engage in that type of behavior, but many children with autism don’t resemble that prototype at all, which is very surprising to teachers.”

MacFarland says it is a misconception that children with autism don’t have a sense of humor. “That is so false. We laugh all the time in



my classroom. Even if they don’t always get humor in the same way we do, they definitely understand humor in their own way.”

“Another misconception is that they are not affectionate and can’t form relationships,” says MacFarland. “I’ve had relationships with every student on the spectrum.

Carlsbad

language pathologists. Many begin with one-on-one sessions with classroom aides, but progress to the point where they can manage on their own. The goal is to make them as independent as possible.

The school has a “sensory break area,” where students with autism can take a time out if needed and calm themselves. Seven-year-old Will jumped 50 times on a small trampoline and did wall pushups and some ball bounces. He then donned a backpack with weights for a few minutes before removing it and heading back to class.

Will performs fine academically, but struggles with communication skills. In a session with speech pathologist Amy Gold, the two play a board game and work at casual conversation. It looks fun, but the purpose is to reinforce the concept of taking turns.

“Turn-taking with a game is concrete,



Peggy McGowan

and from this he learns about conversational turn-taking,” explains Gold. “If someone asks ‘How are you?’ he may not answer. He struggles with conversing on the playground with peers, but he’s young, only in first grade.”

Alicia Granberg, who helps coordinate mainstreaming, says each child has to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

“It also has a lot to do with the general education teachers and how they accept students with disabilities and make accommodations,” says Granberg, a special education teacher. “It can be difficult for the general education teachers that don’t have a special education background, but we are lucky that our district and SELPA [Special Education Local Plan Area] offer trainings and seminars to help everybody understand the needs of all students better.”

The SELPA is a local service area that



ABOVE: Nate (right) gets help in dealing with autism from his friend Ryan at Pacific Rim Elementary School in Carlsbad.



LEFT: Madeline Cabading, an education support professional at West Portal Elementary School in San Francisco, with student Jovin.

Of course it's different. Some kids may not like to be touched at all, and other kids want a bear hug."

For those living with autism, the world can be loud, unpredictable and frustrating, she explains. "They don't navigate socially the way typical students do. The playground may be the worst part of the day for a child who has autism, whereas for other kids, it's the best part of the day. Walking up to another student and saying 'Can I play ball with you?' is a very foreign concept. They feel very isolated."

Why the increase?

There are differing opinions about why autism rates have skyrocketed. Some parents and celebrities who have children with autism blame vaccines, but studies have shown there

is no connection.

"It's unclear whether or not we've simply changed the way we identify children with autism and improved it — or whether something else is going on," says Mundy. "Changes in methods of identification may have increased the number of children identified. Or there may be some change in the environment — or a change in some unknown process — leading us to identify more children."

It wasn't until 1994 that the present diagnostic system came into use, adds Mundy, who explains that diagnosis relies on a lengthy interview in which a specialist observes and assesses a child's behavior. Many children with autism appear to behave normally until around age 3. However, a recent study from the University of Memphis reports that computer analysis of the babbling of children as young as 10 months has succeeded in correctly diagnosing autism 85 percent of the time.

Some believe autism is being "over-diagnosed" and has become the disability du jour.

"When it comes to being on the spectrum, it's hard to tell if it's being over-identified," says one teacher. "I've heard of some parents who have been pushing for the diagnosis so they can get services for their child. I think sometimes that may play into it."

And there's the "Geek Syndrome" theory offered at www.wired.com. This premise main-

tains that a disproportionate number of those in the high-tech industry have autistic tendencies and perhaps even Asperger's syndrome — a higher-functioning form of autism. According to this theory, technologically adept and "geeky" individuals find similar "soul mates" in the workplace, marry and have children that wind up being on the autism spectrum.

"In another historical time, these men would have become monks, developing new ink for early printing presses," says Steve Silberman, who authored the article. "Suddenly they're making \$150,000 a year with stock options. They're reproducing at a much higher rate."

It's true that genetic predisposition does play a role in autism. For example, if one twin has autism, the other twin is likely to have it, and one child with autism in a family increases the chances that another child will be born with autism. However, autism affects children born to parents in all occupations, socioeconomic categories and backgrounds.

Education is paramount

Education is considered to be the primary treatment for autism, which has no known cure. Studies have shown that the earlier education begins, the more positive the outcome is likely to be.

But educational services are fragmented. The California school system offers more than 40 separate services for students with autism. These services include behavior intervention, or helping students behave in social situations; occupational therapy, or helping them with

(continued) Going mainstream in Carlsbad

coordinates with school districts and county offices of education to provide a continuum of programs and services for disabled individuals from birth through 22 years of age, and is also available as a resource to the community on issues related to special education.

It can be distracting for general education students to be in a classroom with students who have autism, because they can have meltdowns, behave inappropriately or blurt out whatever they are thinking, admits Granberg. "When something happens, we work on those things immediately," she says. "We role-play in social groups or lunch groups."

Third-grade teacher Peggy McGowan has had many students with autism in her classroom over the years, and currently has a boy with Asperger's syndrome, a high-functioning form of



Alicia Granberg

autism. It's a challenge, she says, but well worth the effort.

"I think it benefits everybody, and my students learn compassion," she says. "Students become the nurturers, and it's amazing to watch them. Yes, you might have students flapping their hands, jumping up and down, or disruptions, but the kids help each other. They know how to distract someone and can help put fires out quickly. It's very natural and it's not forced. Our kids here are very accepting. We have very little bullying here."

Nate, who has attended Pacific Rim since kindergarten, relies on his classmate Ryan to give him "reminders" and help him stay calm. They have been friends since third grade.

"I always sit next to him," says Ryan. "I think Nate is nice and really funny. He's been an inspiration to me."



ABOVE: Ryan Bentley with student David at Poinsettia Elementary School in Carlsbad.

practical motor skills; speech and language therapy; and one-to-one assistance in the classroom from a paraprofessional. Some students are in mainstream classes most of the time and are pulled out for special services, while others are in self-contained classrooms most of the day.

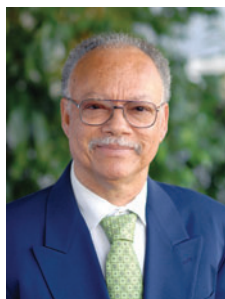
“Pick any two districts with similar numbers of students with autism, and you’ll find little consistency in services offered or students served,” notes the *San Francisco Chronicle*. “Access to services often depends more on where children live, rather than what they may need.”

“Autism presents itself in lots of different ways, in a wide variety of children with a wide variety of needs,” says Mundy. “This creates complications for schools when it comes to providing services for all these children. The needs of some children are being met in public school, but it’s often hard for public schools to have all of the expertise to meet the needs of all these children. There are many children whose needs aren’t being met. But I’m very hesitant to blame public schools for that; the system is the problem because there isn’t enough money to support expertise and services for all children with autism.”

Mundy believes the state is moving in the right direction with the Added Authorizations in Special Education (AASEs). The added authorizations are similar to those for general education, such as BCLAD (Bilin-

gual Crosscultural Language and Academic Development), and are added to an existing special education teaching credential. Each covers a specialty area, such as autism.

The holder of the autism authorization is trained to conduct assessments, provide instruction and provide services related to autism. The autism authorization will be embedded in all special education teaching credentials issued after Jan. 1, 2013. It may now be earned at California State University campuses in San Bernardino, Dominguez Hills, Fullerton and San Marcos, and online from the University of California system (see related story on page 19).



Tyrone Cabell
CTA Board member

The new voluntary authorization may be helpful to special education teachers, but it’s unavailable for general education teachers who need help teaching students with autism.

According to federal law, students with disabilities must receive an education in the “least restrictive environment,” which means mainstreaming wherever possible. But full inclusion can be extremely challenging for some general education teachers — especially when they lack training.

Challenges of mainstreaming

“It can be difficult for teachers,” acknowledges Rachel Thomas, president of the Manhattan Beach Unified Teachers Association. “When children want to make noises in

class and walk around the room during a lesson, it can severely impact the rest of the kids who need to learn and focus. General education teachers don’t want to aggravate or upset these kids. They want them to do well and learn. But sometimes they can prevent other kids from learning, which can be frustrating for teachers.”

Thomas adds that her district hires consultants to provide training to teachers who have students with autism, and teachers greatly appreciate this support.

“The challenge is helping children with autism fit into the structure of the school and helping them deal with their own frustrations,” says Sue Allen, the kindergarten teacher in Middletown. “For the most part mainstreaming is good, and other kids learn to accept children with autism and play with them quite well. Students with autism have more of a sense of belonging and learn to socialize. Because they are special and amazing in different ways, they make me a better teacher for all my students.”

Educators say that mainstreaming children with autism may depend on what parents want rather than what school staff think best meets the needs of the child.

“Sometimes, inclusion is not the answer,” says Madeline Cabading, an education support professional at West Portal Elementary School in San Francisco. “Sometimes it’s more about making the parent happy than what’s right for the child.”

Cabading, a member of United Educators of San Francisco, works one-on-one with chil-

Ryan Bentley, a second-year teacher at nearby Poinsettia Elementary School, has had autism “clusters” in his first-grade classroom both years. During a classroom visit, it’s difficult to tell which children have autism and which do not. He considers all his students “mainstream” and calls those without autism “typical peers” who may also exhibit behavior that can present problems at times.

“I don’t have different standards for students with autism, but I do have different expectations for them,” he says. “Students are expected to raise their hand when they have a question, but kids with autism have a tendency to blurt out whatever they’re thinking. They might be processing what they are learning, and I completely ignore it. If I don’t pay attention to it we can move past it.”

Bentley has not received special training, but he has developed a knack for working with this challenging population. Much of it can be attributed to collaborating with

special education teachers and parents and listening to their advice. And some of it is just instinctual.

“When I give students a new assignment, the typical peers may get it and students with autism may not understand what is being asked. Some will shut down, and some will get verbal, and some will get physically agitated. So any time I see that happen, I get close to the student and down to their level and speak in a calm voice to reassure that student. You have to calm them before they can move forward with anything.”

At first he was apprehensive, but he now loves working with students who have autism.

“Having them in the classroom has helped me improve my overall teaching,” he says.

“The strategies I have learned to help autistic students succeed in the classroom have been

beneficial for helping *all* my kids succeed.”

Bentley’s district has recently offered professional development on how to teach children with autism, but there were not enough spots available to all staff members for this training. He hopes to take district-offered training in the future, and meanwhile has been researching autism himself.

“I think teachers working with kids who have autism can definitely benefit from getting training on how to work with these students,” he says. “There are strategies you can use with autistic students that can really make a difference, and not all teachers know what these strategies are.”



Amy Gold

Learn more about California SELPAs at www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/as/caselpas.asp.

dren who have disabilities. She says her school is a “model school” for full inclusion, and that it works extremely well most of the time. But sometimes it doesn’t.

When children are put into classes that don’t fit their needs, even with an aide, they may become frustrated or even violent. And parents may be overstressed with the everyday challenges they face as well. Some parents hire “advocates” from autism organizations — often lawyers — to become involved in the decision-making regarding their child’s education.

“All of us want what is best for kids,” says Thomas. “It’s very frustrating when teachers, school psychologists, counselors and others make recommendations — and parents choose to ignore them.”

School districts are fearful of autism-related lawsuits. The Escondido Union School District, for example, advised teachers not to be interviewed for this story, even to highlight their excellent program for full inclusion. Teachers say administrators in their district expressed concern that a litigious parent might scrutinize a *California Educator* story on autism and find fault in teacher com-

ments. Many educators statewide approached for this story say they would like to be interviewed, but are reticent to discuss autism.

In June, the Supreme Court upheld a ruling that parents of special education children may seek government reimbursement for private school tuition, even if they have never received special education services in public schools. Nationally, about 90,000 special-education students are in private schools, most of them referred by their public schools, notes the *New York Times*. Here in California, parents of children with autism have requested that school districts reimburse them for out-of-state education, for out-of-state travel to visit their children, and even for wear and tear on their automobiles or new tires for their cars.

In 2004, the Manhattan Beach Unified School District paid nearly \$7 million to a student with autism and his parents for failing to provide an “appropriate” education. Teachers in the district are forbidden to discuss the lawsuit under the terms of the settlement. Thomas, however, will say that special education costs related to autism are having a big impact on public education *everywhere*.

“Special education costs are rising so fast that it affects every aspect of a school’s ability to educate all of our students and provide programs they need, as well as giving teachers a livable wage,” says Thomas. “Our special education costs in this district are 25 percent of our general fund for 12 percent of our student population, so it’s a significant impact.”

Despite the original commitment of Congress to contribute 40 percent of the funding for states’ special education services under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), the federal government historically has provided only 8 percent of the funding, leaving state and local governments to fund the remainder of program costs, totaling approximately \$38 billion dollars nationally, according to the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST), a nonprofit research and development organization that works to expand learning opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

“We love these kids and need adequate resources to educate them in the best way that we can,” says Thomas. “It’s time for the government to step up and pay its fair share.” ❖

Programs for California Professionals in Education Designed to Advance Your Career



Call toll free at 877-GO-TO-ULV
degreeinfo@laverne.edu | laverne.edu

Credentials and Certificates

- Multiple and Single Subject
- Administrative Credentials
- CTEL
- Education Counseling
- School Psychology
- Special Education
- Reading and Language Arts
- Child Life Specialist

Bachelors

- Liberal Studies
- Child Development

Masters

- Educational Management
- School Counseling
- Special Education: Mild/Moderate
- School Psychology
- Reading
- Special Emphasis
- Child Life
- Child Development
- Advanced Teaching

Doctoral

- Organizational Leadership (Ed.D.)



- Small classes with active faculty
- Programs throughout California
- Flexible scheduling
- CCTC approved and WASC accredited

UNIVERSITY OF LA VERNE
College of Education and Organizational Leadership
1950 Third Street, La Verne, California 91750

One of
**America's
Best Colleges**
Forbes Magazine



@neaacademy

Online learning for your lifeSM

Membership has its benefits!

For the best in online professional development, continuing education, and master's degree programs that fit your budget, your schedule, and your life, turn to the NEA Academy.

- Special member-only pricing – **lowest prices anywhere**
- Quality content, hands-on skills, and real-world issues
- **Online 24/7 availability** – no course schedules
- Graduate credit and continuing education units available*
- Partner universities offer **special benefits for NEA members**
 - Master's degree programs with NEA member-only scholarships
 - Tuition discounts on individual courses
 - Fee waivers

Check out the new NEA Academy today!

neaacademy.org

*For details on graduate and CEU credit availability, see full course descriptions at neaacademy.org.
© 2010 National Education Association. All rights reserved.

NA051110

Teaching students with autism



LEFT: Frances Chavez helps student Nishtha rake at Jefferson Middle School in San Gabriel.

INSET: Nishtha works on a project.

Students in Frances Chavez's classroom begin their school day by going to their cubbies and organizing their belongings. On the white board is a minute-by-minute schedule for the rest of the day.

Her students are still learning to tell time. But like clockwork, some can sense if something's off schedule by just a minute or two.

"Students with autism need structure," ex-

plains Chavez, a special education teacher for students with moderate to severe disabilities at Jefferson Middle School in San Gabriel. "They need a structured classroom and a structured setting. They really like having a routine."

Her special day class students, most of whom have autism, are unsettled by loud



noises, bright lights and strangers. She constantly asks her students to be "flexible" when something unexpected happens, like visitors. If they are incapable at the moment, she directs them to a "safe spot" in the classroom to regroup.

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, after small-group instruction, students take a bus to the Los Angeles County Arboretum and Botanical Garden and rake leaves. For many, getting out in the world is the best part of school. They enjoy the repetitive motions of raking. Sometimes they gather up leaves in the process and sometimes they don't.

"Wonderful job," Chavez calls out again and again. "I'm so proud of you."

Students with autism need to hear praise often, says Chavez, even if they don't react emotionally to it. They also need "modeling" of behavior, and need to receive "primary rein-

forcements" or rewards for a job well done.

"In the past we used food," says the Los Angeles County Education Association member. "We don't encourage that anymore because it's not healthy. We'd rather use something more appropriate and find out what they are willing to work for. It might be something like looking at a book or using the computer. For example: 'If you finish these addition problems, I'll let you use the computer for 10 minutes.'"

Learning is easier for students with autism if a teacher gives one- or two-step directions, suggests Chavez. "Everything has to be concrete and sometimes in simple terms that maybe even a kindergartner would understand. There has to be constant 'redirecting' to keep the child focused. They become frustrated if they are not getting small doses of success."

The Puzzle of Autism

The NEA is offering a free online workshop to share strategies to improve education for students with autism. The 90-minute video gives educators and parents the information they need to identify the characteristics of autism and suggests techniques to work successfully with children who have the disability. The video workshop is based on a guide booklet, "The Puzzle of Autism," a collaborative effort among NEA, the Autism

Society of America, the American Speech-Language Hearing Association, and the National Association of School Psychologists. The workshop is presented by two special education experts and includes PowerPoint presentations, handouts and other resources.

To view the free workshop, visit ondemand.neacademy.org. To view "The Puzzle of Autism," visit www.nea.org/assets/docs/autismpuzzle.pdf.



ABOVE: Lisa MacFarland at Hayes Elementary School in San Jose.

Years ago, a student became extremely frustrated and punched her in the kidney. “I saw stars — and I had never seen stars before. But it wasn’t intentional for him to hurt me. It was him being angry. It was the only time one of my students became violent.”

Sue Allen, a full-inclusion kindergarten teacher at Coyote Valley Elementary School in Hidden Valley, advises teachers to follow their instincts when it comes to teaching children with autism.

“Try different things until you find out what works for a particular child,” says Allen, a member of the Middletown Teachers Association. “I allow one of my little guys to roam around the classroom at the end of the day if he’s done what I’ve asked him to do. He goes to the computer and prints out pictures. It’s the best thing in the world for him. I have another student who freezes when we start to do music and movement. He can’t deal with it. So I started asking him if he’d rather look at a book during that time, and it’s taken a lot of stress off him.”

Students with autism are held to different expectations of behavior in Allen’s classroom. “I had one little boy who couldn’t sit on the rug as long as the others, so I allowed him the freedom to move around the classroom as long as he was not disturbing anyone. The other kids knew he was different, so it didn’t bother them. I’m amazed at how sometimes young people can accept those things easier than adults.”

Working with students that have autism takes lots and lots of patience, says paraprofessional Madeline Cabading, who works with autistic children at West Portal Elementary School in San Francisco. “Every child is different, and you have to constantly encourage them and not get upset with them. It’s dif-

ficult because you can think they understand something, but over the weekend they forget and you have to start all over again. You always have to repeat things with them. You can’t get discouraged and you can’t give up.”

Cabading, a member of United Educators of San Francisco, says it can be helpful to appeal to a child’s sense of intellectualism.

“Ask them what works well for them,” she advises. “Make them feel part of the process. Show them that you care for them. Try hard to bond with them. If they don’t show emotion, remember that they can’t help it, but try to bond with them anyway. Often they will bond with you if you are there all the time.”

It helps to watch them, listen to them and figure a way in, says Lisa MacFarland, a teacher at Hayes Elementary School in San Jose.

“I had a student with major behavioral issues who would run out of the room screaming or throw tantrums,” says MacFarland, an Oak Grove Education Association member. “I realized that she was highly anxious, and that these behaviors came out when her environment seemed to be out of control. Once the structure became routine, I saw her anxiety level decrease and lots of behaviors decrease. She’s very, very intelligent, but you have to find ways to access that intelligence in an untypical way. For example, she found writing very difficult, but when you put her in front a keyboard and a computer, she could generate amazing things.”

MacFarland teaches students in grades 4-6 who are “reverse mainstreamed” into her class just to learn social skills. Some of them have a very high intellect and are learning why it is important to interact well with others. She uses *Superflex: A Superhero Social Thinking Curriculum* by Stephanie Madrigal and Michelle Garcia Winner, designed for teaching students with Asperger’s syndrome, high-functioning autism, ADHD and other social difficulties how to build social thinking skills. Her students learn that each of them have “super flexible” capacities in their brains that can overcome rigid cartoon characters such as Un-Wonderer, who stops citizens from showing interest in others by asking questions, Topic Twister Meister and Mean Jean.

“My students with autism identify with these characters because most of the kids

are super rigid,” she says. “Most other kids understand that when you look at somebody it shows you are paying attention and listening to them. But for my kids, it doesn’t come naturally.”

Sometimes, the biggest challenge for teachers is to overcome the *label* of autism, says Peter Mundy, director of educational research at the UC Davis Mind Institute, which is devoted to the research and treatment of autism.

“Most teachers can be effective with these children if they have the confidence to do it and someone to talk to who has the expertise to help them get over the hump of feeling that they don’t know what they are doing,” says Mundy. “My advice to them is this: Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Don’t try to take all the responsibility; work as a team with special education teachers, general education teachers, parents, psychologists and others.”

Tips for teaching students with autism

- > Speak simply and give plenty of time for an individual with autism to respond to questions. A 3-4 second delay is not uncommon. Repeat your question and wait again. Use a calm voice.
- > Don’t assume a nonverbal student who seems not to be listening can’t understand.
- > Remember that students with autism learn and process information better if it is presented visually instead of auditorily.
- > Understand that their rote memory is typically superior to their understanding.
- > Reduced the amount of visual “clutter” in the classroom.
- > Use natural lighting from windows to reduce visually distracting fluorescent lighting.
- > Carefully consider where a child with autism will sit in a regular education classroom. A child may do best seated in the front of the class, facing away from the doors, windows and shelves, to minimize visual distractions.
- > Post “visual schedules” of transitions between activities, so children know what is expected of them and experience less anxiety. This can be with words, pictures or both.

Source: Los Angeles County Office of Education

Early intervention

Dominic, 5, sits inside a tiny room for some one-on-one time with Elizabeth Milan, a psychology graduate student at CSU Fresno. He converses with her just like any child his age, but flaps his arms once in a while when he's excited.

"Grab the dice," says Milan when this happens. The youngster holds on to the dice and calms himself as he continues the conversation.

His occasional "stimming," or flapping, is barely noticeable to the casual observer. But when he first arrived for therapy at the Central California Autism Center (CCAC) at the college campus, it was a different story. He would "stim" or engage in repetitive, self-stimulating body movements constantly. He had difficulty paying attention and interacting with his peers because he lacked communication and social skills.

Amazingly, after intensive therapy at the CCAC, Dominic has lost his autism diagnosis.

"We can't say that he is cured, but we might say he's in recovery from autism," says Amanda Adams, the California Faculty Association member who founded the program three years ago and oversees its operation. "After intensive work with us, he no longer qualifies for an autism diagnosis."

Five other graduates of the program have

also lost their diagnosis, she says proudly.

Adams, a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, joined the Fresno State faculty in 2006 as an assistant professor in the Psychology Department. Prior to that, she spent a decade working with children who have autism in a variety of settings, including university programs and school districts. As the director of CCAC, she conducts research in autism and trains students at Fresno State in using Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), so they can provide early intervention to autistic children.

Adams and her cohort of trained students work intensively with preschoolers as young as age 3 who have been diagnosed with autism.

"With autism, the earlier the intervention, the better," says Adams. "Research has shown that early detection and behavioral intervention are the most important things when it comes to treatment. It's important to do screening right away. Parents may fear a false positive,

but even if these kids went into treatment without being autistic, it's like going into a super-powered preschool program. And no harm can come of that."

Some children spend eight hours a day at the clinic to learn language, communication and emotional recognition. Children "copy



Amanda Adams
CSU Fresno



and model" their student therapists while playing games, using manipulatives, answering questions and other interactions. It seems like fun and games, but they are learning how to communicate, take turns, and "read" emotions and moods in others. There are no sensory break areas here; instead therapists try to "redirect" a child in positive ways before that child has a meltdown.

"Eight hours a day may seem like a lot of time here for a very young child, but research shows that up to 40 hours a week of intervention delivers the best outcome," says Adams. "Our goal is to help them catch up, and we can't waste time."

The program offers treatment for children on all levels of the autism spectrum using ABA, which grew out of the work of psychologist B.F. Skinner and uses reinforcement to encourage learning. Therapists break down skills ranging from simple to complex into repeated practice, usually in a one-on-one setting. When a child performs a task well, he or she is rewarded with a cracker or other incentive, such as being able to use the computer or play with a puzzle.

LEFT: Student Elizabeth Milan works with Dominic at the Central California Autism Center at CSU Fresno.





LEFT: Amanda Adams watches student Angeline Molina work with Karlye at CSU Fresno.

ABA has been criticized as a treatment that is harsh or robotic. However, Adams says, ABA has evolved over time, and at her clinic the interaction between youngsters and trained college students is playful and enjoyable. Graduate students working with the children are indeed very affectionate during their sessions, and make the behavioral therapy seem more like playtime.

“Lots of research now shows that neuro-

logical abnormalities can change, and that neurons in the brain can actually change when exposed to different kinds of teaching,” says Adams. “It’s not unlike a brain injury that people can recover from. We don’t know if a child would have gone through these changes neurologically and improved on their own, but teaching in an ABA structured manner increases the speed of their skill acquisition.”

Even when the youngsters answer questions correctly — about shapes and colors, for example — the question is asked again and again. The reason, says Adams, is that sometimes children with autism give “rote” answers without being aware of their meaning.

A little girl named Karlye, for example, was practicing to recognize facial emotions, such as angry, happy, sad, scared and surprised. When she answered a question correctly she was rewarded, but she forgot the correct answer within minutes.

“A regular child may take 10 times to learn the color red, while it may take an autistic child 100 times,” says Adams. “Parents who seek out our type of program are not looking for a quick fix.”

Parents meet in groups weekly and individually with therapists every other week to learn how to integrate ABA into a child’s life at home. There is also a component for siblings, so they learn positive ways to interact with their brothers and sisters.

“Our center-based model not only delivers high-quality treatment, but gives parents support and a place to go,” says Adams. “Sometimes parents of children with autism feel isolated. Here, they can meet other families with similar experiences and help each other deal with the stress and challenges of having a child with autism.”

While the student therapists conduct intensive one-on-one therapy with the children, graduate students watch behind one-way mirrors to supervise the activities and record their observations. Their observations are providing research as to which strategies — reinforcement, building rapport and pre-exposure to concepts — yield the best results.

“We definitely need to find out more about autism,” says Adams. “The figures show that we are dealing with an epidemic, and it looks like the disease is going to be a mystery for a while.” ❖

To learn more about the Central California Autism Center, visit www.csufresno.edu/ccac.

Added Authorization *in Special Education*

The California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) has told districts that it is not mandatory for a teacher to earn an Added Authorization in Special Education (AASE) in a specialty area if the teacher is already authorized to provide services in that area (www.ctc.ca.gov/notices/coded/2009/0916.pdf). At the same time, a teacher may not be assigned students with disabilities for which the teacher is not authorized; if this occurs, the teacher is considered misassigned. As an interim measure, AB 2303 has established a temporary route (called a Local Teaching Assignment Option) for assigning holders of specific special education credentials to provide special education instructional services to students with autism. This option

expires in July 2011, and by that date any special education teacher assigned to students with autism disorders must have an autism disorders authorization in their prerequisite credential or through obtaining an AASE in autism.

Currently, some employers are notifying teachers that they must obtain an AASE, and some are inaccurately stating that the CTC is requiring all special education teachers to return to school to earn an AASE.

Recommendations

- Teachers should check their credentials first and review CTC documents to determine their eligibility to earn AASEs.
- If the employer notifies teachers that they must obtain an AASE, chapters should con-

sider issuing a demand to bargain. Issues to be negotiated might include the following: class size, caseloads, transfer, assignment, compensation for time needed to obtain authorization, reimbursement for tuition to obtain the units, and wages.

➤ Get district support for obtaining AASEs. For example, a district might pay for all fees related to additional coursework, contract with a college or university with an approved AASE program to provide classes locally at a district/school site, or provide release time to attend classes during the regular school day.

For more information about the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing Added Authorization Summary, see www.ctc.ca.gov/credentials/leaflets/cl890.pdf.



Teaching culturally sensitive

HOLIDAY

Stories by **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin** • Photos by **Scott Buschman**

IS COLUMBUS DAY ABOUT A BOLD EXPLORER “discovering” America? Or is it a day to commemorate the acts of cruelty, enslavement and genocide against Native Americans already here?

Is Thanksgiving a time for students to wear paper vests, headdresses and feathers portraying Indians feasting with Pilgrims? Or is this a cartoonish stereotype that would never be tolerated if it depicted other ethnic minority groups?

Things have changed since we learned “In fourteen hundred ninety-two, Columbus sailed the ocean blue.” Some school districts have done away with Columbus Day altogether and instead celebrate Indigenous People’s Day.

It’s not easy to teach about holidays and history in a way that is culturally sensitive and accurate. History books still gloss over unpleasant facts, as shown in *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* by James W. Loewen, which describes in detail how Columbus enslaved natives, mutilated and tortured them, forced them to work in gold mines, and was both a “heroic navigator and plunderer” in the name of religion.

“If textbooks included these facts, they might induce students to think intelligently about why the West dominates the world today,” says Loewen, a former history teacher at the University of Vermont. “That is unfortunate, because Columbus’ voyages constitute a splendid teachable moment.”

Offering cultural perspective

Matthew De Lucia-Zeltzer, a third-grade teacher at Cesar Chavez Elementary School in San Francisco, enjoys the challenge of

turning a lesson about Columbus into an exercise in critical thinking. He believes in teaching history in a way that’s “progressive, not in terms of the status quo,” and observes that many of his Latino students also have indigenous roots.

The Friday before Columbus Day, the teacher known as “Mr. D-Z” asks students to look at an ambiguous picture. Half of them see a duck; the other half see a bunny.

“What you see depends on your experiences and your point of view,” says the United Educators of San Francisco member. “How you see something might not be how someone else sees it. This happens in class. It also happens throughout history.”

Next he reads aloud from *Encounter* by Jane Yolen, which tells the story of Columbus from the perspective of a child belonging to the Taino tribe. Columbus and his men appear friendly, but the boy sees that they are greedy for gold. The invaders attempt to enslave the boy with other Indians they have taken captive, but he escapes.

As part of the lesson, students are asked to write essays from the point of view of the Taino Indians and also through the eyes of Columbus. He wants his students to think critically about past historical events and their ramifications today.

“Just because you put your flag in a piece of land doesn’t make it yours,” says student Ashley Cunanan. “That’s just rude.”

“If not for Columbus, we would not be here,” points out classmate Darwin Mendoza. “He was brave, and his goal was making things better for his own people.”

The students are young and spared from hearing about some of the worst atrocities committed by Columbus against native peoples. But Don Steinruck, who teaches at the Smith River Elementary School, does not hold back during social studies lessons for middle schoolers.

Columbus brought famine and disease to Haiti, the island where he first set foot on North American soil, and terrorized the Tainos into supplying food and labor, Steinruck informs his students. Those who defied Columbus were pursued into the hills and murdered, while thousands decided to take their own



Marty Meeden
CTA Board member



LEFT: Ashley Cunanan, Isabel Martinez and Adrian Parra at Cesar Chavez Elementary gain a new perspective on Columbus Day.

DAYS

lives and the lives of their children rather than submit to the conqueror.

Steinruck belongs to the Absentee Shawnee tribe, which received the name nearly a century ago because tribal elders were absent during the federal government's census count in Oklahoma. For many years he was chair of CTA's American Indian/Alaska Native Caucus.

"When I was a boy growing up in California, we got Columbus Day off from school, and I never knew why until I got into high school," says Steinruck, a member of the Del Norte Teachers Association. "But as I delved into history, I saw it as much more than taking a day off. It was really a day to cry and a day for mourning."

The behavior of Columbus toward Native Americans set the stage for mistreatment that continued until fairly recent times, notes Steinruck, including the forced sterilization of Native American women and mandatory boarding school for children, which continued through the 1970s. Steinruck asks his students to compare the 1948 United Nations convention on genocide with how Native



Americans were treated.

"I am one of very few Native American teachers in California, and I want you to know the truth," Steinruck says to students. "We must know the whole story, not just bits and pieces. We must know the facts so we can educate others."

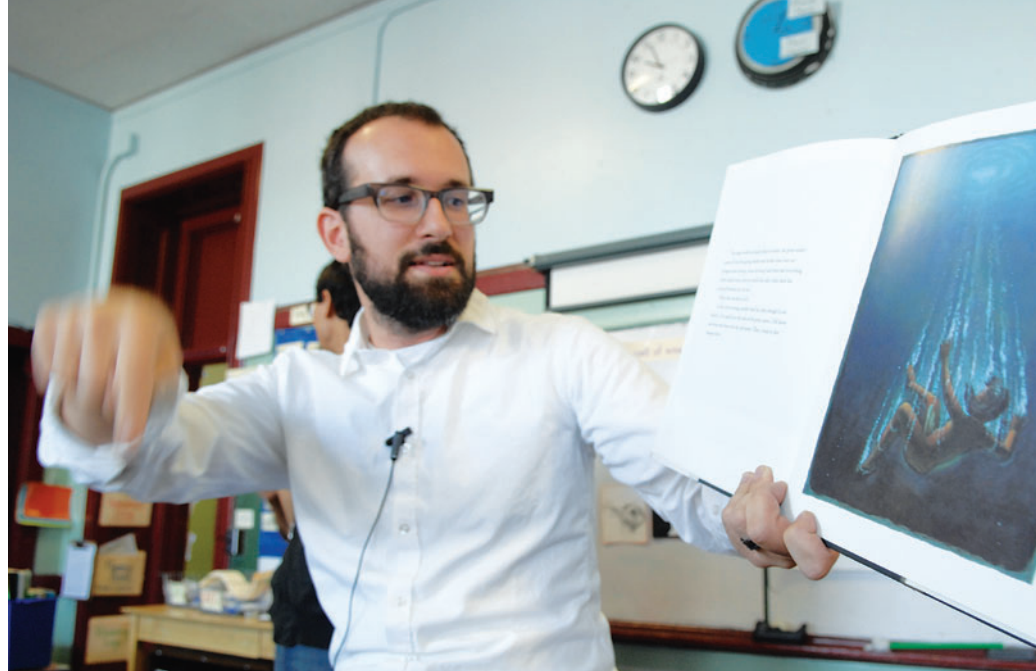
While Thanksgiving is a less controversial holiday, some teachers are rethinking how it should be taught, with more emphasis on Native American culture and the spirit of giving. Many schools hold multicultural "harvest celebrations" and ask students to bring a dish reflecting their own nationality.

Loewen maintains that during the first Thanksgiving, the Wampanoag Indians and the Pilgrims did get along peacefully. However, the feast was a precursor of terrible things to come for Native Americans, including wars and the Indian Removal Act.

CTA Board member Marty Meeden, a member of the Paiute tribe from Mono Lake, resents the "paper bag" Indian costume worn by students in Thanksgiving re-enactments, since it implies that Indian culture is disposable and can be wadded up and thrown away.

Youngsters wear feathers in school Thanksgiving celebrations, without realizing the religious significance feathers play in the lives of Native Americans, Meeden observes. Other regalia mimicked in paper have religious sig-

LEFT: Don Steinruck teaches his students at Smith River Elementary School about Columbus' cruel treatment of Native Americans.



ABOVE: Matthew De Lucia-Zeltzer reads from *Encounter* by Jane Yolen to his students at Cesar Chavez Elementary in San Francisco.

nificance for Native Americans and can only be worn after undergoing a "rite of passage," such as surviving for several days in the wilderness without food or water.

"Could you imagine students re-enacting the Last Supper of Christ and having all of his disciplines wearing paper bags?" asks Meeden. "People would not tolerate this. But somehow it's okay when it happens to other cultures."

Continued on page 36

Resources for teaching about Columbus Day and Thanksgiving

- > *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, by James W. Loewen, critically examines 12 popular American history textbooks and concludes that textbook authors propagate false, mythologized views of history.
- > *Encounter*, by Jane Yolen, is an account of the arrival of Columbus on the island of San Salvador, as viewed through the eyes of a Taino boy.
- > *500 Nations*, an eight-part television documentary hosted by Kevin Costner, surveys the history of Native Americans of North and Central America from pre-Columbian times to the end of the 19th century.
- > <http://indigenouscaribbean.wordpress.com/directory/tainos-greater-caribbean-usa> provides information about the Tainos and other indigenous peoples of the Caribbean.



Film sparks discussion of school reform in Vacaville

With the help of CTA Vice President Dean Vogel, Vacaville teachers in Solano County galvanized their community about education reform by screening the acclaimed new documentary film *Race to Nowhere*, holding a town hall discussion afterward.

Vogel led that discussion. “We can actually come together as a community,” he told the packed movie theater in Vacaville, his home school district of many years. “We can take our schools back.”

For educators, the 85-minute film is a more thoughtful look at public education hopes and problems than the well-financed documentary *Waiting for Superman*, a polarizing production that demonizes traditional public schools, teachers and their unions.

Julie Timmerman, a fourth-grade teacher at Markham Elementary School in Vacaville, told the Vacaville newspaper *The Reporter* that *Waiting for Superman* was a simplistic view of education that was unfair to teachers.

“It’s really hard to hear all of the teacher bashing going on right now.”

While focusing on the stresses that students face, *Race to Nowhere* also looks at the consequences of federal policies that force teachers to teach to the test instead of providing a well-rounded classroom experience.

In its September review of the movie, the *New York Times* described the effort by first-time filmmaker Vicki Abeles: “Packed with educators, parents, authors and articulate youngsters, *Race to Nowhere* reaches out to children hounded by a confluence of circumstances: parental fears of a disappearing middle class; an emphasis on unrealistic performance standards (the bell curve is not a fantasy); a teach-to-the-test curriculum that favors memorization over critical thinking; and the competitiveness of college entrance requirements.”

The makers of the film are using grassroots distribution tactics, urging teachers, parents and anyone else who wants to host

a screening to go to www.racetonowhere.com for information on how to co-sponsor a viewing. And Vacaville Teachers Association chapter activist Corey Penrose did just that. He told *The Reporter*, which did a story promoting the screening, that the film really shows how the most fragile students are not getting the help they deserve. “The push to narrow the focus doesn’t help the kids who need additional support the most to be successful.”

Vacaville teachers received a grant from the CTA Community Outreach Department to create and air local radio ads promoting the Nov. 4 screening and discussion, with assistance from CTA Board

member Larry Allen. Part of the ticket proceeds go to the film’s creators, with a portion going to the Vacaville Public Education Fund as well.

Vogel told the inspired crowd at Brenden Theatres after the movie that the teachers in the audience are the best hope for fair reforms. Educators want “to return to a comprehensive curriculum — the arts and science and music,” not to cut these vital programs. All math teachers understand the relationship between math and music and how students benefit from that, said Vogel.

“It’s all connected.”

MIKE MYSLINSKI

Enjoy the rewards.



Get something back for your everyday purchases. Use your California Teachers Association Visa® Card with WorldPoints® rewards from Bank of America, and you’ll earn points you can redeem for cash, travel, merchandise, even unique adventures. Rewards for the things you buy anyway. Plus ongoing support for the California Teachers Association.

1.866.438.6262

Use Priority Code FACBGV when calling.

WorldPoints

For information about the rates, fees, and other costs and benefits associated with the use of this Rewards card, or to apply, call the toll free number above, or write to P.O. Box 15020, Wilmington, DE 19850.

♦ Terms apply to program features and Credit Card account benefits. For more information about the program, visit bankofamerica.com/worldpoints. Details accompany new account materials.

This credit card program is issued and administered by FIA Card Services, N.A. The WorldPoints program is managed in part by independent third parties, including a travel agency registered to do business in California (Reg. No. 2036509-50); Ohio (Reg. No. 87890286); Washington (6011237430) and other states, as required. Visa is a registered trademark of Visa International Service Association, and is used by the issuer pursuant to license from Visa U.S.A. Inc. WorldPoints, the WorldPoints design and Platinum Plus are registered trademarks of FIA Card Services, N.A. Bank of America and the Bank of America logo are registered trademarks of Bank of America Corporation. All other company and product names and logos are the property of others and their use does not imply endorsement of, or an association with, the WorldPoints program.

©2008 Bank of America Corporation

T-709149-092107

BA02-08-10988

GLBT Conference: Perspectives of participants

interviews by Bill Guy

“Moving Toward New Horizons” was the theme and the Westin Mission Hills Resort in Rancho Mirage was the place when 229 CTA members and staff met Oct. 29-31 to participate in CTA’s second annual Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgen-

der Conference. The GLBT Issues Advisory Committee, co-chaired by Sue Cirillo, United Teachers Los Angeles, and C. Scott Miller, Santa Ana Educators Association, planned the workshop offerings, which included sessions on exploring the intersections of race,

gender and sexual orientation, stress management, creating safe spaces for students and colleagues, anti-bullying strategies, how to facilitate Gay Straight Alliances, and welcoming GLBT parents and their children.



Even though I’m out and I know I have students who are out, sometimes the communication can be difficult, so anything I can learn to help my students and colleagues deal with GLBT issues will be helpful. I’m an adviser for the Gay Straight Alliance on our campus, but because I also teach some adjunct courses at a couple of other area community colleges, I find that I don’t always have the time to participate as much as I would like. This conference — an entire weekend devoted solely to these issues — is a great opportunity for me.

*Alan Wade, English composition and literature
Southwestern Community College, San Diego*



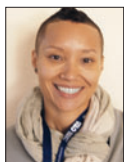
Middle school students are at such a confusing age in most any circumstance, but when they are also struggling with their sexual identities, it can be agonizingly difficult for them. As a counselor, I have a special affinity for helping all students, but as an out lesbian, I have a special sensitivity to what GLBT students may be experiencing. Far too many have either tried or succeeded in taking their own lives. So I’m participating in this conference to learn more about how to better create the kinds of supportive school environments that students need.

*Diane Hartman, middle school counselor
Moreno Valley Educators Association*



As a high school government teacher, I find that GLBT issues are often in the forefront of what my students are seeing on television, in the newspapers and online. It’s very relevant to my work, so I’m hoping to learn information at the conference that will help me be more effective in helping my students understand such complex and sensitive issues. But I also have more personal reasons for participating that include coming to a better understanding of my personal rights as a gay educator and someone who assists with our school’s Gay Straight Alliance. I hope to get a clearer picture of the boundary lines involved in promoting a supportive, safe environment for my students, my colleagues and myself, while also being tolerant of the rights of all and not just those who agree with me.

*Chris Brunette, high school U.S. history, government, economics
Yucaipa Calimesa Educators Association*



It is such a great thing that CTA is sponsoring an entire conference devoted to GLBT issues. Too often professional development and conference workshops may devote one or two sessions sort of hidden in the back corner, but an opportunity to take a series of workshops and network with so many fellow educators about these issues is outstanding. My primary reasons for participating have to do with better understanding what is safe for me as a gay educator in interactions with both my students and my fellow staff members. Also, I want to learn how to be a better advocate for my students who experience discrimination and bullying. I just finished participating in the “Is It a Choice?” workshop, and I now have many great resources, documentaries and film clips to take back with me. I’m really glad CTA is offering this conference and that I came to it.

*Salina Joiner, English special education, grades 9-12
Asociación de Maestros Unidos, Green Dot Charter School, Los Angeles*



I fully lend my support to the goals of this conference. It’s so important for everyone — and especially educators — to learn how to promote tolerance and acceptance, and especially to prevent bullying at school and online. I have learned that acceptance is often a long process, and it has taken me years to come to terms with my own orientation. So another reason I am participating in this conference is to support all my brothers and sisters who may still be in the closet, and who may be in situations where it may not only be uncomfortable, but in some instances may not even be safe, for them to come out. In the school setting, you have to balance your own individuality with the sensitivities in your community and among your students and their families. But these conferences help by giving us the resources and the information to make those kinds of distinctions while still advocating for safety and tolerance.

*Sergio Martinez, fifth grade
Hacienda La Puente Teachers Association*

Continued on page 24

CTA photos by Bill Guy



I work with so many students who say they are struggling with internal issues and who are being bullied by their peers, and when I found out about this conference, I really wanted to come so that I could learn more about GLBT issues. I want both to help my students who are being bullied and to positively influence the students doing the bullying.

*Millie Crosby, sixth-grade physical education
San Jose Teachers Association*



As a totally out teacher at my school, I'm also one of the go-to people on UTLA's Gay and Lesbian Issues Committee. Previously, I was chair of my school's Our Adolescents Staying in School (OASIS) organization. I get calls for assistance from my colleagues, and I'm also active in providing assistance to colleagues and their students who are forming and facilitating Gay Straight Alliance organizations. It's personally important for me to help them create networks of support at their school sites. So, it's a natural for me to come to a conference like this to stay informed and involved. It's especially important for me to stay up with the latest legal issues and policies affecting the civil rights of GLBT students and educators.

*Edgar Angulo, community day school, grades 9-12
United Teachers Los Angeles*



CTA photos by Bill Guy

I'm straight, and I've always supported my school's Gay Straight Alliance. Toward the end of last year's term, I was especially impressed by the efforts of a student in the GSA who promoted a movement at school against using the word "retarded." I expressed encouragement and support, and on the first day back this year, I had a handwritten note from him saying how much my support had meant to him. That note is a touchstone for me, displayed prominently behind my desk. Then, after we began to hear about the terrible string of suicides by young GLBT students throughout the country earlier this fall, I just knew I had to participate in this conference. I'm supposed to be here — to listen, to learn, and to take back resources and inspiration to help any of my students or colleagues. It is not OK for anyone to be in despair over their sexual orientation.

*Kimberly Gilles, high school English
San Ramon Education Association*

New iPads help Tahoe-Truckee leaders communicate

Representing members in one of the geographically largest chapters in the state can be a daunting task. But communication in the Tahoe-Truckee Education Association was recently made a whole lot easier — and chapter leaders didn't have to move (Sierra) mountains to do it.

Chapter leaders will now be able to communicate across two counties and a mountain range using slick, new Apple iPads to conduct their business. Jon Halvorsen and Ed Hilton, co-presidents of the 200-plus member association, expect the up-front financial commitment to be well worthwhile.

"Communication is the number one priority for our chapter right now," says Halvorsen. "In winter, it can take an hour's drive to meet with one another. We've just made ourselves closer."

Halvorsen and his members are no strangers to using social

networks to get their message out. The association has its own Facebook page, and Halvorsen contributes to CTA's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/californiateachersassociation) and on Twitter, where he regularly posts pro-education, pro-union messages. He and Hilton also keep an up-to-date blog at www.tahoetruckeeteachers.org, a simple but robust chapter website that not only provides members with the latest news and documents they need, but has a Twitter feed. Halvorsen created a chapter YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/tahoetruckeeteachers#p/f), which features videos of Tahoe-Truckee members speaking out at school board meetings; Jerry Brown's remarks to CTA's State Council; messages from the National Education Association; and other relevant information.

"Our theme this year is 'Join the Conversation,'" says Hal-



Photo courtesy of Tahoe-Truckee Education Association

ABOVE: Leaders of the Tahoe-Truckee Education Association, one of the geographically largest chapters in the state, have improved communication with new Apple iPads.

vorsen, "and our goal is to get more of our members involved in issues including Race to the Top and pay-for-performance. We have to get the message from teachers out there."

The idea for purchasing an iPad for each of the 14 association leaders actually came from the school district, which has

made a major commitment to improving student achievement and upgrading the professional development of its teachers through the use of technology.

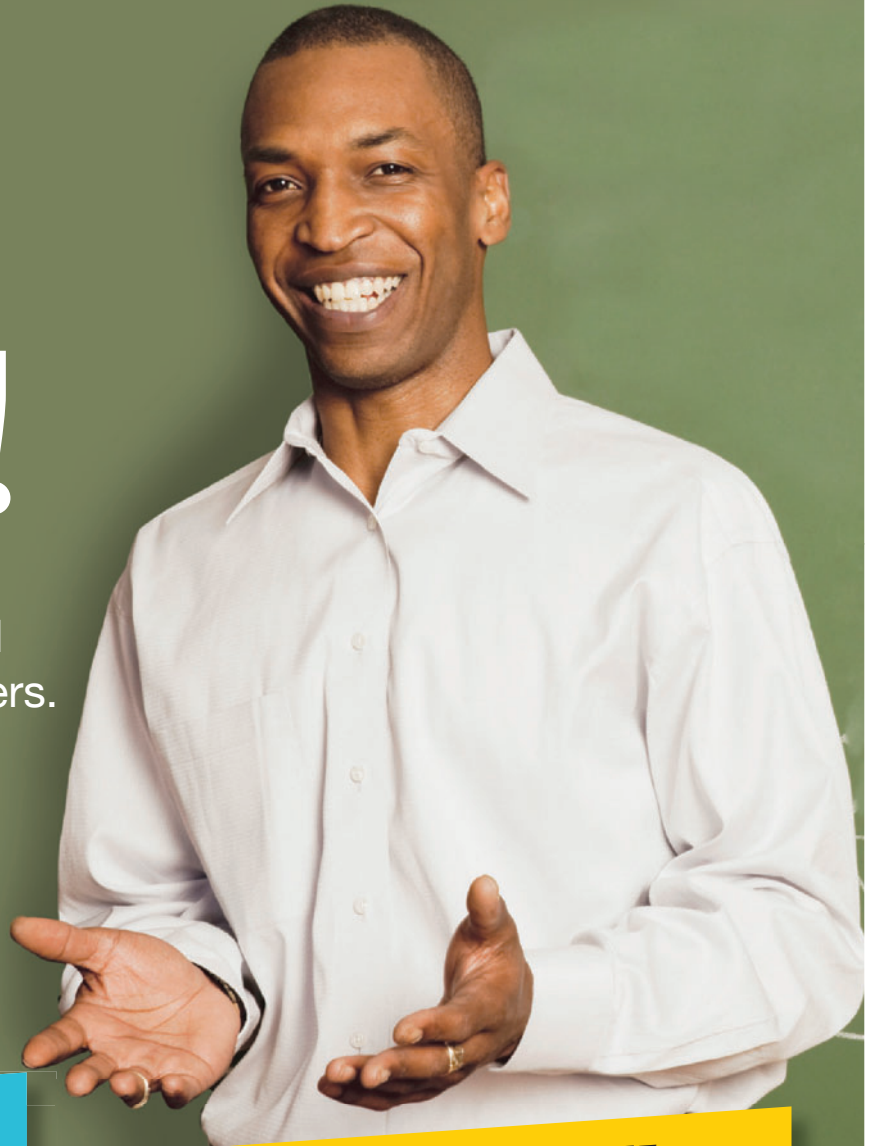
"The district is serious about technology, and expects its employees to be serious as well," says Halvorsen. "We began to

Continued on page 37

Officially endorsed by 

Good News!

Auto insurance rates are reduced by an additional **11.7%** for CTA members.



NEW LOWER RATES!

CALL 1.888.744.9717 TODAY FOR A FREE, NO OBLIGATION QUOTE.



Have you received an auto insurance quote from California Casualty before? Now's the time to get a new quote. Rates for CTA members have just been reduced by an additional 11.7% on average, so call now to find out how much you can save. California Casualty has been proud to serve CTA for nearly 60 years with innovative auto and home insurance. Now, we're happy to offer you that same great coverage for less money. Just call 1.888.744.9717 or visit www.calcas.com/cta today!

*Rates for current CTA policyholders will be adjusted at renewal.

OR GET A QUOTE ONLINE AT WWW.CALCAS.COM/CTA

2010 big election wins

CTA leaders huddled together anxiously, eyes jumping between the big screen projecting the live feed of election results from the secretary of state's website and the TVs showing CNN and KRON 2 San Fran-

Shortly before 9 p.m., the good news began to roll in: *The Capitol Weekly* was declaring Jerry Brown the winner of the race for governor over Republican Meg Whitman, with 10 percent of the precincts reporting. Then the Associated Press

nonstop on the campaign had tears in their eyes.

Big wins

CTA galvanized its members, as well as friends of public education, in the battle to elect Brown, who has the ability to

business," cut billions more from education, and continue on the downward path of the present governor, whose inexperience has caused unnecessary damage to our schools and state during tough economic times.

With the election of Torlakson, a former classroom teacher, CTA members have a friend and a place at the table when it comes to education reform. The legislator who authored the CTA-backed Quality Education Investment Act — a bill that secured funding to bring extra resources to struggling schools — has vowed to help schools get the funding and support they desperately need.

Boxer's re-election was also crucial. With so many conservatives recently elected to seats in Washington, Sen. Boxer will continue to be a voice of reason and work hard to see that schools are supported at the federal level.

The passage of CTA-supported Proposition 25, which does away with the two-thirds vote required to pass a budget,

will make it possible for the state budget to be passed on time, saving hundreds of millions of dollars and



CTA Photos by Mike Myslinski

cisco election coverage. This was the moment it had all come to — months of members volunteering, phone banking, talking to family and friends. Would Jerry win? What about Boxer? She was in a tough race. And what about Proposition 24, the Tax Fairness Act? Would the fear tactics of its opponents prevail?

called the U.S. Senate race for incumbent Democrat Barbara Boxer over GOP challenger Carly Fiorina.

For CTA members and staff at the Oakland Marriott, the waiting was over. The vigil turned into a party, and members cheered, pumped their fists in the air and hugged one another. Some who had worked

lead this state out of fiscal crisis, bring collaboration back to Sacramento and restore our public schools to greatness. The alternative was Meg Whitman, a billionaire with no government experience, who planned to “run schools as a



ABOVE: At the Oakland Democratic Party event on election night, CTA President David A. Sanchez and CTA Vice President Dean Vogel cheer moments after the announcement of the victory of Jerry Brown for California governor.

GOVERNOR **JERRY BROWN**

RIGHT: Jerry Brown surrounded by media and partygoers at the Oakland Democratic Party event on election night as he hears he has just won the race for governor of California.

allowing schools to plan their budgets in advance.

Unfortunately, CTA-sponsored Proposition 24, which would have closed tax loopholes for large corporations and helped to increase funding for schools, was rejected by voters.

CTA leaders on the election results

“This was a very important election,” said CTA President David A. Sanchez. “The end result was that voters made it clear their vote was not for sale — and this election could not be bought. And it was really the working class that turned out to vote and send this message. Voters also sent a clear message with their candidate choices that they wanted leaders who respected teachers and would work with us to improve our struggling schools. The real winners tonight are our students, schools and colleges.”

Sanchez also expressed appreciation to members and staff for the hard work that went into the 2010 campaign. “Take it from me, CTA members made a big difference in this election. And their work to mobilize our members was the key to making that happen.”

“What stood out in this campaign is that the entire labor community came together



Photo by Scott Buschman

to support Jerry Brown for governor,” said CTA Vice President Dean Vogel. “It was a great team effort. So much of this campaign was about labor bashing coming from the far right, trying to energize their base. But even though union

bashing was on television all the time, it didn’t mean this was the view held by the public, or that this message resonated with the general public. Californians still believe in public education — and believe in teachers.”

“It proves that there is nothing that teachers can’t accomplish if they work together,” said CTA Secretary-Treasurer Gail Mendes. “And that’s exactly what we did. Even though Proposition 24 did not pass, we have laid the groundwork

CTA wins scores of local and state races

CTA members and resources made the difference in scores of local and state races, showing that the election was a vote for public schools and those candidates who support them.

In the races for Congress and the state Legislature, CTA had a success rate of 70 percent, based on unofficial election results at press time.

CTA also helped pass Proposition 25, a major victory that means the state will now join 47 others in the nation requiring only a simple majority vote in the Legislature to pass a state budget.

Local CTA chapters won 66 percent of the candidates and local measures they endorsed and fought for with phone banking, precinct walking and community mobilization.

Statewide, a healthy 46 of 63 school bond measures were approved by voters, providing \$3.6 billion for school construction and modernization, the California

Department of Education reported.

The ongoing recession hurt the chances of teachers seeking the two-thirds supermajority vote needed to pass parcel taxes, with only two of 18 securing passage. Eleven more parcel taxes would have passed if the threshold for approval had been 55 percent, the same as for school bonds, an overdue change that is supported by CTA and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O’Connell.

Members of the Fremont Unified District Teachers Association in the Bay Area were ecstatic that their modest \$53 parcel tax was one that mustered enough votes to pass, with 69.4 percent. It will provide up to \$3.3 million a year for five years to keep class sizes small in the Fremont Unified School District, and restore at least some of the cuts in programs, said an elated FUDTA President Brannin Dorsey.

“This is a huge win for us,” Dorsey said. “It is not a silver bullet, but the funds will help stop the bleeding.”

2010 big election wins



LEFT: Tom Torlakson, elected state superintendent of public instruction, along with his wife Mae Cendaña Torlakson (second and third from left), joins CTA Secretary-Treasurer Gail Mendes, President David A. Sanchez, Vice President Dean Vogel, and Executive Director Carolyn Doggett at the Oakland Democratic Party event.

for continuing this battle in the future.”

Some of CTA’s opponents spent millions of their own money, and seemed to have an unlimited supply. Their negative messages saturated the airwaves with lies and misconceptions, as they attempted to capitalize on voter unhappiness with the slow pace of the economic recovery in California. But still CTA prevailed, thanks in large part to CTA’s 2010 Campaign Workgroup and its careful planning, which included good ole grassroots organizing combined with the power of social media.

“The key part of our strategy was nonstop talking to our members,” said CTA Board member Bonnie Shatun, who serves as the board liaison to the workgroup and CTA’s Political Involvement Committee. “We encouraged building reps and CTA leaders throughout the state to have relational meetings and talk to their members one-on-one. And we insisted that these be two-way

conversations.”

Those involved in CTA’s campaign also telephoned fellow members relentlessly to make sure they understood that the future of public education in California was at stake in this election, said Shatun. There was phone banking throughout the state, and hundreds of CTA State Council members engaged in phone banking during the October meeting.

All forms of social networking also came into play. “We had members using Facebook and posting to all their friends,” said Shatun. “Members were tweeting. We didn’t overlook social networking, and it made a huge difference. I’m relatively new to Facebook myself, but I jumped in and was posting to all my friends. Texting also played a huge part in our plan. Members signed up to receive text messages and tens of thousands were sent out about supporting candidates and propositions, and where to find polling places.”

“Many cogs in this wheel came together,” Shatun summed up.

Gayle Bilek, chair of the Campaign 2010 Workgroup and president of the Templeton Teachers Association, said that “canvass cards” were also instrumental in helping to galvanize members. CTA leaders carried cards for members to fill out, answering yes or no on whether they supported certain candidates and propositions. “It was a helpful way of bringing people into the conversation,” said Bilek. “And it gave us an opportunity for important conversations.”

Overall, said Bilek, the key to the campaign’s success was having members pull together as a cohesive group. “We made that happen, and everyone worked well together.”

“It was probably the best-coordinated campaign that I’ve



ABOVE: Newly re-elected U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Oakland) at the Oakland Democratic Party event.

ever seen CTA put on,” said Marc Sternberger, a member of the CTA Board. “I’ve been a part of CTA campaigns since the 1980s, and I was glad to see so many members getting involved.”

Students played a key role in the campaign, too. Areli Dohner-Chavez, president of Student CTA and a student at CSU Stanislaus, said students worked hard to get the message out to their friends, families and others about the importance of this election.

“We decided to focus on issues that had the most impact on students as a way of bringing attention to this election, rather than focusing on the party line,” said Chavez. “Issues like financial aid and tuition have a tremendous impact on students.”

Support of minority groups also played a huge role, said Sanchez. “Latinos and other groups came out in force in support of public schools,” he told those gathered at a CTA reception and watch party held at the Oakland Marriott on election night.

“I’m excited and I’m thrilled,” said CTA Board member Theresa Montaño, who represents higher education. “I would say it’s just unbelievable — especially when you look at everything that was working against us. I’m so proud of what our members were able to accomplish for our students.”

Newly elected officials thank CTA

CTA-supported candidates dropped by the Marriott reception to express heartfelt thanks to CTA members for their support.

“Teachers have been incredible and the rock of my campaign,” said Torlakson shortly before his victory was announced. “Thanks from the bottom of my heart. CTA helped me with a dynamic program including a virtual town hall and social media. I truly admire the creative powers of CTA during this whole endeavor.”

“I couldn’t do this without the support of teachers,” said newly re-elected U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Oakland). “The support of teachers has been very, very important to me, and I appreciate your steady support for me over

RIGHT: Jerry Brown supporter celebrates the win at the Oakland Democratic Party event on election night.

the years. You do so much to help our children, which is also helping our future.”

Brown, the newly elected governor, held his own reception a few blocks away in Oakland at the Fox Theater. Supporters waited until shortly before 11 p.m. because Brown had not received a call from Whitman conceding the race. Finally, the governor-elect went onstage without receiving a call



from his opponent, thanking his supporters for all they have done. Brown thanked his wife,

Anne Gust Brown, and was surrounded by children from Oakland schools. Public schools, said Brown, are the future and the key to California’s recovery.

“My goal is for every single school in California to have what it needs,” said Brown. “Every kid has so much potential.” When making decisions, he said, politicians must keep this question in the forefront: Will it help the next generation?

Brown vowed to try to end the polarization of political parties, so that members on both sides can work together for the public good. “We are all God’s children, and I am hoping and praying that the breakdown that’s gone on so many years in the state Capitol and Washington will end, and that we can pave the way for a breakthrough,” he said.

“We needed change in our state, and that change was ushered in tonight,” said Sanchez. “I’m excited about Brown, Boxer and Torlakson, who are the winners. But the real winners tonight are the students in our public schools.”

SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

Capistrano **teachers** elect cooperative board members



CTA photo by Bill Guyl

LEFT: Many of the same Capistrano Unified Education Association members who walked the picket lines in last April’s three-day strike that more recently walked precincts leading up to the November 2 school board election in the south Orange County district. Their successful efforts helped elect new members that should bring reason and responsibility back to the chaos-plagued district.

When more than 2,000 members of the Capistrano Unified Education Association (CUEA) walked the picket lines in a three-day strike last April – forcing the school board’s negotiating team to back off an imposed contract and accept language promising to restore salary and benefits cuts with future new revenue – they knew it was just the first in a two-step process to restore integrity and sound management to the chaos-plagued south Orange County district.

Capturing the momentum from the strike that resulted in thousands more petition signatures than necessary to bring two adversarial board members up for recall, the broad coalition of educators, parents and community members swept those two seats for their endorsed candidates November 2, but also celebrated the election of another coalition-

friendly candidate. The lone previously cooperative board member remains, so teachers now look forward to working with a positive and progressive 4-3 majority on the new school board.

In addition, the CUEA-backed Measure H passed overwhelmingly, meaning that in future board elections, candidates will have to run from the areas where they live, making it much more difficult for future “reform cabals” to coalesce for a power grab.

“Capistrano’s teachers will be forever grateful for the overwhelming support from our fellow CTA members statewide during our strike,” said CUEA President Vicki Soderberg. “There’s no doubt it helped us stay the course to elect new school board members that will bring reason and responsibility back to our schools.”

ACTION

Voter turnout key to election wins, says Sanchez



CTA photos by Dave Earl Carpenter

LEFT: Assembly Speaker John Perez (second from left) joins CTA Secretary-Treasurer Gail Mendes, President David A. Sanchez, Vice President Dean Vogel, and Executive Director Carolyn Doggett at State Council.

50 calls himself. He added that members would continue to phone-bank in their local chapters right up to Election Day.

CTA Executive Director Carolyn Doggett — who has been a 15-year classroom teacher, a local chapter president, and president of NEA-Alaska — said that she has never seen attacks on educators and their unions like the kind we are witnessing today.

made their calls, the number of contacted voters as well as live text messages about the election were projected on two Jumbotron screens

in the ballroom. More than 700 members who signed up to receive special election texts from CTAVOTES also texted in messages about the importance of getting out the vote.

“It was a tremendous effort,” said Sanchez, who made some

Whether it is education reform, our pensions, the right to bargain, or using our dues as we see fit in this election, the “blame game” is running rampant, Doggett told Council. She cited several recent developments, including the article “How to Fix Our Schools: A Manifesto” by Joel Klein, Michelle Rhee and others; the recent film *Waiting for Superman*; and charges by gubernatorial candidate Meg Whitman that blame teachers

Turning out the vote for CTA-supported candidates and initiatives was the take-home message from CTA President David A. Sanchez in his remarks to CTA’s State Council of Education on Saturday, Oct. 24, a little more than a week before Election Day.

“We are in the home stretch, and the outcome will impact students, schools, our profession and our union. We have to keep it up. This election is all about turnout.”

Sanchez also noted that this year California’s budget was 100 days late and \$4.3 billion short in what was owed to schools and community colleges. “California may still be in hard economic times, but we can’t say to a first-grader, ‘Come back in three or four years when the recession is over, and then we’ll

be able to teach you to read.’ California students deserve better. That’s why this election is so important.”

Hundreds of State Council members participated in California’s largest election phone bank that afternoon, making 8,700 calls to voters throughout California. The calls were all made to urge voters to cast their ballots for Proposition 24, the Tax Fairness Act; Jerry Brown for governor; and Tom Torlakson for state superintendent of public instruction.

While Council members

RIGHT: Fontana Teachers Association member Deborah Torres placing calls at the State Council phone-banking event held in the main ballroom on Saturday, where that afternoon over 8,700 calls were made to voters in California.





ABOVE: Twin Rivers United Educators member Chuck Denonn personally made over 3,000 completed calls in the weeks leading up to the election.

unions for problems in America's schools.

"Rather than sit back and

let the blame game go on," said Doggett, "CTA must take charge and define these issues in our terms. When it comes to school reform, teachers must be part of the discussion and must continue to advance reforms we know will work. That is why CTA established the Teacher Evaluation Workgroup, so that CTA can set the agenda in the evaluation discussion.

"CTA must continue to show that resources matter, and that teacher-driven reform works. We are already leading the effort in education reform with the Quality Education Investment Act and the Institute for Teaching, both of which are demonstrating success."

DINA MARTIN

In other action, State Council:

- Authorized up to \$1 million from the Initiative Fund to support CTA's ballot initiatives.
- Elected Doreen McGuire-Grigg as NEA Director, District 1, and Barbara Franklin as CTA/ABC Committee member, District N.
- Decided that a forum for CTA executive officer candidates will take place at the next State Council in February. Members may send their questions in advance to candidatesforum@cta.org.
- Observed presentations on the 10th anniversary of the CTA César E. Chávez Memorial Education Awards program and Breast Cancer Awareness.
- Expressed interest in encouraging members to see or arrange for a screening of *Race to Nowhere*, a documentary about America's schooling system that combats the simple solutions presented by the recent film *Waiting for Superman*.
- Approved a bylaw amendment limiting service on CTA's Board of Directors to three three-year terms.

In addition, the Retirement Committee created a useful flier to help members debunk myths about teachers' retirement benefits, and various committees participated in the Teacher Evaluation Survey to provide input for the CTA Teacher Evaluation Workgroup.

CTA, coalition will continue to urge newly elected officials to protect public education

California's newly elected governor and new Legislature will soon confront the state's ongoing fiscal crisis, which the Legislature's own nonpartisan analyst has projected will result in a \$25 billion shortfall by the 2011-12 budget year.

As they begin their work, officials will continue to hear from CTA and educators around the state, reminding them of the devastating effects that the previous cuts, already exceeding \$21 billion in three years, have had on California classrooms.

While lame-duck Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has called a special legislative session for Dec. 6 on the 2010-11 budget deficit of about \$6.1 billion, those elected officials responsible for balancing the budget in the long term are expected to be much more concerned about shielding schools from additional slashes.

On Nov. 2 California voters elected a host of pro-education officials. It will be CTA-recommended Gov. Jerry Brown who will be proposing budget revisions aimed at protecting public schools, teachers and students over the two-year period. And it will be CTA-recommended Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson who will be proposing policy changes aimed at supporting teachers and other education professionals as they seek to provide a high-quality education to every student.

With the passage of Proposition 25 — also supported by CTA — the Legislature will be empowered to pass a legislative budget on a simple majority vote, unlike past years when the two-thirds vote requirement gave a small group of legislators the power to hold up the budget until their demands were met. Those demands often

resulted in gains for wealthy corporations and more reductions in available funds for public schools.

Though there were significant wins for education at the polls this election year, Gov. Brown and lawmakers will face considerable challenges. Voters rejected CTA-sponsored Proposition 24, which would have rolled back more than \$1.3 billion in corporate tax breaks that were scheduled to begin next year — part of the price demanded by a legislative minority for their votes on the state spending package. Voters' refusal to eliminate the \$1.3 billion in corporate giveaways could leave legislators scrambling to find ways to reduce state spending by a similar amount.

The passage of Proposition 26 will also create many new challenges for lawmakers and eliminate revenue options as "fee" increases will now require a two-

thirds vote. (Note: The simple majority proposition only applies to the state budget; it does not affect the two-thirds vote needed to raise taxes and now other revenues.) The initiative is retroactive, meaning that as current fees expire, they will have to be renewed by a two-thirds vote.

Voters also passed Proposition 22, blocking the state government from transferring funds from local government, even in the most dire emergencies. That prohibition could impact lawmakers' ability to fund other statewide public services. Together, Props. 22 and 26 mean an additional cut of \$1 billion to public education this year.

Despite these hurdles, CTA will continue to educate lawmakers and other elected officials about the effects of the drastic cuts on education, students and teachers.

LEN FELDMAN



How will the new Common Core State Standards impact teachers?

In August, California joined 33 states and the District of Columbia in approving new Common Core standards in math, English language arts, and literacy in history/social studies, science and technical subjects for K-12 students. CTA members, who were enjoying their summer vacations when all this took place, have lots of questions.

For answers, we turned to CTA member Kathy Harris, who served on the California Academic Content Standards Commission. She has been an educator for 25 years, teaches third-graders at Olivet Elementary School, and is a member of the Piner-Olivet Educators Association. We also enlisted the help of fellow commission member Pat Sabo, a teacher for 34 years and member of the Healdsburg Area Teachers Association, who teaches eighth-grade algebra at Healdsburg Junior High. They are two of 11 CTA members serving on the commission, which also includes administrators, university faculty, school board members, and a few holdovers from the original committee that first adopted state standards in 1997.

CALIFORNIA EDUCATOR: We already had world-class standards. Why do we need new ones?

Currently our standards are very broad, with lots of skills kids are supposed to master and be tested on. The new Common Core standards will

allow us to go *deeper* with instruction because there are fewer standards. They are also clearer and higher standards. A great deal of research has been done since our standards were adopted, especially regarding language development and comprehension. None of that is reflected in our current state standards, but much current research is reflected in the Common Core standards. In the new standards, we have incorporated research about what actually improves teaching and learning.

Did Race to the Top (RTTT) cause the new standards?

The National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State Schools Officers, the two groups instrumental in making this happen, got together before RTTT was even conceived. The Obama administration saw the Common Core standards as a good thing and picked it up as requirement of RTTT and attached a timeline, which turned out to be very challenging for California and other states.

What does “Common Core” mean?

It means there are common *anchor standards* that go across grade levels. It’s part of having fewer standards. These core standards span grade levels K-12 — and anchor the grade level specific standards. States were told that if they adopted the Common Core standards, they should comprise at least

85 percent of a state’s standards in math and English. California’s interpretation was to adopt 100 percent of the Common Core standards and add on another 15 percent, instead of taking anything away.

Are the new standards going to be drastically different than the existing ones?

The developers of the Common Core standards include some of the same people who developed the California standards, and they used California’s standards as the foundational piece. So the Common Core standards should look very familiar to California teachers, although there will be differences — especially more emphasis on comprehension. There are also some brand-new components. So there will be new curriculum, new materials and professional development, but it’s not going to be a whole new world. Teachers will likely be pleased and relieved at the way that the expectations are more appropriate to children’s development.

When will the Common Core standards take effect?

Implementation should occur in the 2011-12 school year. The actual timeline will depend on actions by the Legislature to authorize and fund the implementation. Two consortiums are looking at assessments that will go along with Common Core standards, and then states will be using common assessments. Teachers can look at the Com-

mon Core standards now and begin tweaking their instruction at www.scoe.net/castandards.

Should teachers be worried about having to teach to new standards?

Teachers should be able to get the support, information and professional development they will need for the new standards. The state’s goal is that the transition will occur in a thoughtful and thorough way. We can’t do this in a vacuum; we can’t just publish standards and think people will understand all it entails.

Is anything lacking in the new Common Core standards?

One thing that is not present in the Common Core is anything specific for English learners. When the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted the Common Core, there was a lot of public testimony from people who wanted to make sure that the English language development standards in California were immediately reviewed and aligned to Common Core to meet the needs of English learners. The SBE heard that loud and clear, so that will be one of their goals.

When will schools need to get new textbooks and other materials?

A timeline will be developed by the California Department of Education and submitted to the SBE for approval to make sure new pieces get implemented in

a responsible, sensible way, and it will happen around the same time that new materials would be adopted anyway.

How will the Common Core affect testing and teaching?

Testing will change eventually. The new standards have much more of a focus on application and making sure kids use the skills and strategies they learn. The new standards are more practical with less emphasis on learning skills and more on actually using those skills, thinking and doing. There should be more discourse in the classroom, more opportunities for kids to talk to each other.

This is estimated by EdSource to cost about \$1.6 billion. Is it worth it?

We think it is, provided the state makes the investment. Our system as a whole needs ratcheting up. There are kids that really need “going deeper” time, but they are not getting that because teachers are so worried about covering the standards, which are so broad. Teachers have so many standards to cover that they can’t go back and revisit them. Many teachers feel as though they are on a treadmill running through the curriculum so they can get to the end and kids can be tested. With the Common Core in place this should change, with fewer standards at each grade level that are also more age appropriate. It’s not cheap, but change is never cheap.

What’s the deal with eighth-grade algebra?

Under current California standards there is just one eighth-grade math standard, and that is algebra. But if they’re not taking it, they take general

math, which covers sixth- and seventh-grade standards. Almost 50 percent of California’s eighth-grade students fall into that category now. The Common Core State standards left it up to individual states. If a state wanted to have algebra as an eighth-grade core, it could; but if it also wanted to have a high-level pre-algebra core, it could. This is what California decided to do: Have an eighth-grade algebra core for some students and also a high-level pre-algebra core for others, which is supposed to be a powerful preparation for algebra. CTA is concerned that this could lead to tracking, however, and encourages schools to be very careful that this does not happen, especially with low-income students and students of color.

Will the Common Core standards continue to evolve?

Yes, they will continue to evolve based on evidence and experiences across the nation. One of things we voiced concern about on the commission was whether, by adopting new standards, we were also adopting every *version* of Common Core standards to come? The answer is no. In California we are adopting this particular version of the Common Core standards and we will consider adopting updated versions as they come up. These Common Core standards have been reviewed by teachers across the country. NEA and the CTA State Council Curriculum and Instruction Committee spent numerous hours and days reviewing the core standards. And we will continue to review them as they evolve.

SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

CHECK OUT WHAT'S NEW AT CTAinvest.org

Need help with your 403(b)?
Have questions about
investing and
retirement planning?
CTAinvest.org has
answers.



1 Getting Started

This section will step you through how to get started with your 403(b) or 457 plan.

2 Educational Videos

Topics include *Why Participate in Your 403(b)/457 Plan*, *Comparing 403(b) and 457 Plans*, *Choosing a 403(b) or 457 Product*, *A Look at Target-Date Funds* and *A Look at Fixed Annuities*.

3 Ask the Advisor

Post your general questions about financial issues. A team of financial experts will respond to the questions and post the answers for all to view.

4 Personalized Checklist

Download a list of financial planning duties and keep track of what you need to do to stay on course. You can even sign up for e-mail reminders!

No login is required!



WATCH AT:
www.apu.edu/stories/ron

Ron Letourneau '88
Principal, Santa Fe Middle School, Monrovia, CA



Further your career in education.

Now more than ever, our children need great educators. If you're considering a career change or continuing your education, we invite you to explore Azusa Pacific University. With programs for teachers, counselors, coaches, and administrators, we're confident APU has a degree for you.

APU offers:

- Convenient classes 1 night a week at 1 of 8 Southern California locations.
- More than 36 credential and master's degree opportunities.
- Accelerated programs that allow you to earn your degree in just 12-18 months.
- NCATE-accredited programs recognized by all 50 states and internationally.

Programs start five times throughout the year. Contact us today!

- Call** (800) 825-5278
- Click** www.apu.edu/explore/education
- Email** graduatecenter@apu.edu



AZUSA | HIGH DESERT | INLAND EMPIRE | LOS ANGELES | MURRIETA
 ORANGE COUNTY | SAN DIEGO | VENTURA COUNTY | ONLINE

11031

Heads up!

Conferences and events

Day of the Special Educator December 3, 2010

The California Legislature has proclaimed Dec. 3, 2010, as Day of the Special Educator in appreciation of the contributions made by special educators in California schools, and has urged all Californians to recognize the dedication and hard work of special educators. The event is sponsored by CARS+, the Organization for Special Educators, which chose the date to follow the anniversary of the signing of the nation's first federal special education law (the precursor of IDEA) on Dec. 2, 1975.

Issues Conference January 14-16, 2011 Rio All-Suite Hotel, Las Vegas

This inaugural conference combines CTA's Rural Issues, Urban Issues and ESP conferences into one event, bringing together CTA members with diverse interests and perspectives for an innovative opportunity to learn from many of the best content experts in the state. The theme of this completely redesigned conference is "Realizing Our Dream for Public Education." Brand-new sessions have been developed, and favorite trainings have been updated. As a special incentive to attend this valuable training, transportation costs will be reimbursed for first-time participants (those who have not previously attended any CTA Rural Issues, Urban Issues or ESP conferences) from chapters with 300 or fewer members; for up to four participants from Service Center Councils; and for up to five participants from each UniServ unit. For more information, visit www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Events/Conferences.

Good Teaching Conference North January 21-23, 2011 Marriott, San Jose Convention Center

The CTA Good Teaching Conference, presented in Northern and Southern editions, is designed to support excellent teaching and learning practices for classroom teachers. Offering a variety of diverse workshops in curriculum content areas for K-12 teachers, the conference provides opportunities for professional development and offers time to network and share ideas with colleagues and experts in the field. More than 80 workshops are scheduled, including sessions on innovative educational best practices, technology, classroom management, and much more. Rob Black, the popular host of television's "Rob Black and Your Money," will present a bonus session Saturday morning on financial issues for educators. For more information, visit www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Events/Conferences.

CLMS/CLHS Annual Conference North February 25-27, 2011 Sheraton Grand Sacramento

The California League of Schools, encompassing the communities of the California League of Middle Schools and the California League of High Schools, presents an annual conference in Northern and Southern editions offering high-quality professional development to connect teachers, administrators and school support staff to a range of solutions for the real-world challenges impacting California's K-12 schools. Gain useful ideas, strategies and tools to improve student achievement at your school. Attend as a team for maximum effectiveness. The Annual Conference North offers over 100 sessions led by seasoned educators and specialists; separate session strands for middle, high and elementary school educators; sessions on reading, math and other content areas, RtI, PLCs, differentiated instruction, integrated technology, data/assessment, classroom management, Program Improvement exit strategies, and more; over 14 quality professional development hours; and college credit. Featured speakers are Rick Wormeli and Dr. Sharon Faber. For more information, visit www.leagueofschools.org/events/north.htm.

Continued on page 37

CTAinvest.org helps members be good investors

“Teachers are often so focused on educating others that they sometimes neglect educating themselves on things like financial literacy,” says Oak Grove Educators Association member Maggie Ellis. “The CTAinvest.org site is a really great way to arm members with the knowledge to close that financial literacy gap.”

A great way to work toward the goal of being more financially literate is to supplement your pension with a 403(b) plan. Because 403(b) retirement plans can appear complex, CTA launched a new website for its members, CTAinvest.org, in August 2009. Designed to offer members helpful financial tools and resources, www.ctainvest.org

provides a secure and straightforward way to make better-informed decisions about your investments and retirement plans. And with new enhancements made as a result of CTA member feedback, the site includes even more features and interactivity — and no log-in is required.

“Educators in California have such a strong guaranteed retirement system in place with CalSTRS and CalPERS,” says Corning Elementary Faculty Association Vice President Philip Barletto. “But the reality is that retirement is expensive. We live longer, and inflation rates and health care costs continue to rise. We need to supplement our retirement with our own

“Educators need to make time to plan for their retirement, and the earlier the better,”

KC Walsh
Oak Grove Educators
Association

savings — and that can be done through a 403(b) plan.”

Because financial experts have suggested that individuals may need 90 to 100 percent of their pre-retirement income to maintain an uninterrupted lifestyle and cover health care expenses in retirement, it makes perfect sense to plan ahead.

“CTA works in partnership with CalSTRS on its members’ behalf to maintain and protect your pension,” says CTA president David A. Sanchez. “However, a CalSTRS pension will not replace 80 percent to 100 percent of your pre-retirement

income. That’s where voluntary savings in the form of 403(b) and 457 plans come in, and why CTA has developed these financial tools for its members.”

The CTA State Council Retirement Committee has had a long-term goal to see more financial literacy education available to teachers. Too many educators have been taken advantage of by investment advisers. CTA believes the solution is for members to educate themselves. CTAinvest.org makes it easier for members to become informed, with tools like “CalSTRS 403(b) Compare” helping them see any hidden charges.

“Educators need to make time to plan for their retirement, and the earlier the better,” says Oak Grove Educators Association President KC Walsh. “It’s an easy-to-use website with so many helpful tools and resources. I tell members to visit CTAinvest.org even if they can only spare 15 minutes of their time — it is well worth the time invested.”

CAROLE ANNE LUCKENBACH

Where is your career taking you? With a J.D., your options are endless.

If you want to sit for the California Bar, we have the most cost effective answer.



- In house zero percent financing
- Small class size
- Classes meet only twice a week
- Courtroom training skills curriculum

Earn your J.D. either online, or at our Carlsbad or Los Angeles campus and review facility. The online option allows you to study from your home, while traveling, or anywhere there is an Internet connection.



Apply online at
CaliforniaMidland.com
or call: 760-929-5900

WE DO NOT REQUIRE THE LSAT FOR ADMISSION

All-new features at www.ctainvest.org added from member feedback

- Five brief videos, averaging 2-3 minutes, loaded with resources to support your financial future.
- Interactive quizzes and answers to increase your knowledge of financial topics.
- A personalized checklist designed to help you remember to complete important financial tasks.
- “Ask the Advisor” lets you post general questions about financial topics.

Holidays

Continued from page 21

An opportunity to teach

Two years ago in Claremont, parents of kindergartners at neighboring schools fought about whether students should be allowed to continue the longtime tradition of dressing up as Native Americans and Pilgrims and sharing a feast.

Suzanne Miller, a kindergarten teacher at Mountain View Elementary School, recalls that a Native American parent complained to school officials about paper bag costumes being degrading to Native Americans, so teachers at her school and Condit Elementary School opted not to have the children dress up, even though the costumes had been created. Miller says no disrespect was intended from the costumes and that she and other teachers used Thanksgiving as an opportunity to teach students about Native American culture — and harmony between diverse groups.

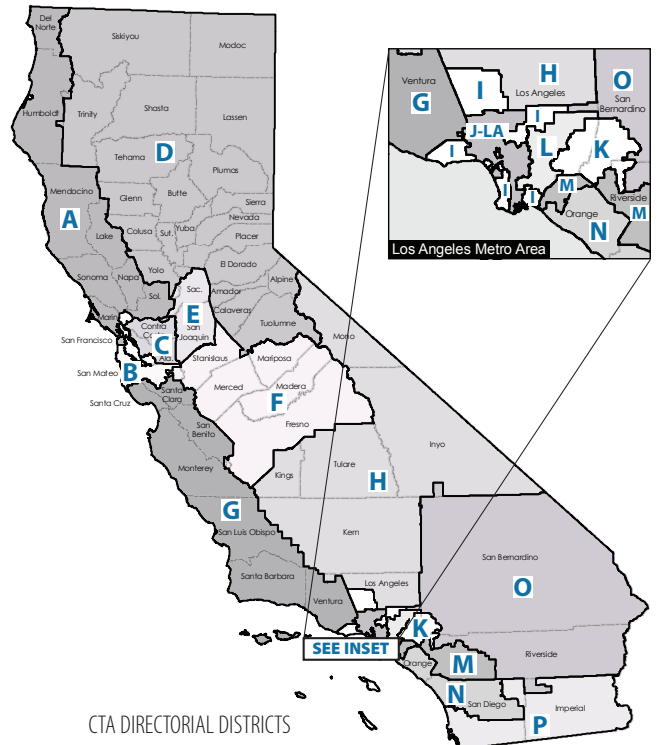
When parents found out the costumes had been banned, some became angry and decided to remove them from their children's classrooms. They sent their children to school in paper bag Indian costumes, despite the school's decision against it. Native American parents became angry at the school.

"It was terrible," recounts Miller, a member of the Claremont Faculty Association. "You had little kids walking to school in these costumes and people holding up signs about genocide and the police showing up, and it

BELOW: Del Norte Teachers Association member Diana Lee shares her perspective on culturally sensitive holidays.



ALLEN (A)	4,503.47
BOYD (E)	2,875.74
BRIDGE (K)	3,883.64
CABELL (L)	4,575.74
CICHOCKI (O)	3,327.25
DAVIDSON (F)	4,005.24
DAWSON (B)	2,339.04
DILLON (D)	6,137.49
GOLDBERG (J-LA)	1,793.58
GROTH (P)	3,276.33
HASSON (J-HE)	5,928.03
HEINS (C)	7,368.28
MEEDEN (At-Large)	5,671.44
MELENDEZ (H)	7,601.14
MENDES	2,712.96
ORTEGA (J-LA)	4,039.41
PEÑA (G)	8,000.58
ROGERS (M)	3,158.70
SANCHEZ	11,148.52
SHATUN (I)	2,693.27
STERNBERGER (CTA/NEA Coordination)	1,647.34
STONE (N)	4,463.20
VOGEL	4,859.38
WASHINGTON (At-Large)	2,900.85



Amounts represent monthly average for a representative quarter of fiscal year 2009-10. During this reporting period, the normal and statewide activities include CTA Board meetings, State Council, Service Center meetings, Equity and Human Rights Conference, Good Teaching Conference, various task force meetings and other business related functions. Some differences in expenditures may be due to the widely varied geographic sizes of directorial districts, distances traveled for Regional, Service Center and other meeting(s), and the varied number of functions CTA Directors are responsible for attending.

was all on national news. Kindergartners don't need to learn about genocide. They'll get that information when they get older."

Since then, says Miller, the district has created a committee to create guidelines for celebrating Thanksgiving in a culturally sensitive way and is considering a harvest theme.

Diana Lee, a kindergarten teacher at Smith River Elementary School in Del Norte, says she used to hold Thanksgiving lessons that included paper Pilgrim hats and Indian headdresses. But she no longer does that in her classroom, which has several Native American students.

"I wasn't thinking about how the parents of Native American children would feel, and I started questioning whether I should do it," says the Del Norte Teachers Association member. "Yes, it was fun to have

everyone dressed up, but I learned that wasn't appropriate."

During a recent lesson about Thanksgiving, the children talked about how the Pilgrims learned to plant corn and crops from the Indians and celebrated in a feast called Thanksgiving. They were then asked to write down and draw things they were thankful about in their own lives. One student was grateful for his dad's muscles; another for television; and another for his toy cement truck.

"Basically, we don't talk about the Pilgrims too much. We talk about friendship and being grateful, and introduce the holiday as a way of giving thanks," says Lee. "To me, it's about being grateful for family, grateful for what's on the table, grateful for our health and for all of the things we have." ❖



Suzanne Miller
Claremont Faculty Association

Tahoe-Truckee

Continued from page 24

think of ways to conduct our own business online and to make it easier for our site representatives. It just made sense. With prices for iPads starting to come down, we decided to go for it."

Halvorsen and Hilton say they have already noticed that chapter communication has improved and that the iPad has provided for increased communication between site reps and allowed them to get back to members more quickly as well. The reps are using them to synchronize calendars, share Google documents, e-mail, chat, and obtain access to contracts and other material.

At \$500 apiece, the iPads were a serious investment by the chapter. Halvorsen and Hilton expected to get some pushback from their members, yet they have only received positive comments.

"Everyone is very excited about it," says Halvorsen. "We think it's really a step in the right direction."

DINA MARTIN

Heads up

Continued from page 34

Deadlines

CTA Human Rights Awards January 7, 2011

The goal of the CTA Human Rights Awards Program is to promote the development of programs for the advancement and protection of human and civil rights within the association. There are nine award categories for individual CTA members, as well as CTA Chapter and CTA Service Center Council awards. Any active member, chapter, caucus or Service Center Council may submit nominations. Nomination forms must be postmarked or faxed by Jan. 7. The awards will be presented March 5 at the Equity and Human Rights Conference. For more information, visit www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Awards.

CTA State Gold Awards January 21, 2011

Nominations for the 2010 CTA State Gold Awards must be submitted by Friday, Jan. 21. CTA State Gold Awards may be bestowed upon any person or organization whose leadership, acts and support have proved them to be a true friend of public education deserving state-wide recognition. Awards are given in two categories: business, and nonprofit/community organization. Any CTA affiliate, other unit, or individual member may place a name in nomination. The nomination form may be downloaded from the CTA website (www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Awards). The nomination form must be accompanied by supporting materials and submitted to the CTA Communications Committee.



New!

Introducing the Clear Credential Program (Single and Multiple Subject)

The UC San Diego Extension SB 2042 Clear Credential program is designed for public, charter and private school teachers who are employed in a school or district that do not have an Induction program.

After completing the program, students can then initiate the formal recommendation to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

The new UC San Diego Extension Clear Credential Program is:

- 100% online.
- designed to meet the new standards defined by the CCTC.
- one of the first programs to be made available under the new CCTC standards.
- specifically designed to be **completed within one year**.
- UC San Diego Extension is now accepting applications for the new program.

To view credential requirements, the program FAQ and to download an application please visit our Clear Credential program page at extension.ucsd.edu/clearcredential.

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

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

Programs include:

- CLAD Through CTET
- CCTC-Approved Reading Certificate
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- College Counseling
- Gifted and Talented Education (GATE)
- Teaching Adult Learners
- Teaching Online
- Professional Development/ Salary Point Coursework

For more information, please contact
Morgan Appel, Director of Education at: (858) 964-1064 or mappel@ucsd.edu

extension.ucsd.edu/education

SU10-1064

Jonestown survivor found healing through teaching



Photo by Scott Buschman

Laura Johnston Kohl has always wanted to make the world a better place. That's what motivated her to become a teacher. It's also what motivated her to follow the Rev. Jim Jones into the jungle of Guyana more than 30 years ago. This Escondido teacher recently published a book to share her incredible story with others.

She met Jim Jones in 1970 after experiencing a failed marriage and becoming disillusioned with the hippie movement. In the eyes of Kohl, a college dropout, Jones' interracial church was a successful experiment in social justice and helping the downtrodden. For seven years she was active in the San Francisco-based Peoples Temple, and was a welfare department eligibility worker. When she moved to Jonestown, the agricultural jungle community in Guyana, she thought she'd found paradise.

There were ominous overtones, but she ignored them. Looking back, she describes herself and others as somewhat "clueless" and Jones as "insane."

When 900 people were told to drink cyanide-laced Kool-

Aid at gunpoint, Kohl happened to be working miles away in Georgetown, the capital of Guyana. She was staying in a house with more than 50 other Peoples Temple members, including one mother who killed herself and her three children after receiving a coded message by radio from Jonestown. Kohl arrived later at the home to see them being carried out in body bags by Guyanese officials. She and all the others were placed under house arrest so they wouldn't harm themselves.

When she returned from Guyana to California, she was asked by a reporter how it felt to be "home." She told him that she wasn't returning home; in fact, she had just left her home in Guyana. Nearly everyone she had cared about and everything she had worked toward was gone.

"I thought about working with computers, because I wanted to be in front of a computer the rest of my life and never have to face another person again," she recalls. "I was a basket case."

She also admits to struggling with survivor guilt for several years, even though she was not there at the time of the massacre. "Jim Jones didn't do what he did single-handedly," she says.

Determined to rebuild her life, she completed college with a double major in philosophy and psychology, and then earned her clear multiple subject teaching credential. She has been an elementary school teacher for 15 years in California public schools. Teaching seemed like the natural thing to do. In Jonestown, she had taught

conversational Spanish and arts and crafts to the children. She had taught classes in many venues over the years, from CPR in Spanish to English as a second language in workplaces and schools.

"I was determined to heal and thought the best way to do that would be to have an impact on the world, and teaching is the most direct way to do so," she explains. "I had to find something where I could use all my energy and commitment to making a better world every moment of every day."

Kohl, 62, now teaches sixth-grade English-language arts at Hidden Valley Middle School, and is a member of the Escondido Elementary Education Association. She doesn't talk to her students about Jonestown. But she does talk to them about making good choices and being independent thinkers.

"I hold them totally accountable," she says. "I tell them, 'You're in sixth grade, and the decisions you make at this point in your life can affect the rest of your life.'"

Her book, *Jonestown Survivor: An Insider's Look*, was published in March, and is available through iUniverse and Amazon. It took Kohl more than 30 years to get to the point where she could put her experiences into written words. Once she started, the process took three years. After it was published, she worried at first about what her colleagues might think. She says they have been very supportive of her, and that many of them have bought copies of her book.

Kohl believes that she

would have been happy living the rest of her life in Jonestown if tragedy had not struck. Jones, whom she describes as a "master actor" who was able to control others through the art of manipulation, was mentally ill and addicted to drugs, says Kohl. He was also deteriorating physically and did not want to die alone. Kohl wishes that Jim Jones had indeed died, so that others could have been able to carry on their dream of living in an egalitarian, self-sufficient community.

Kohl says she wrote the book because she wanted to dignify those who had died in Jonestown, and wanted others to know who they were. She also hopes her story will inspire others to overcome adversity, just as she has.

"I have learned from my experiences and from writing this book that I can do anything I want to do," says Kohl. "I have learned that nothing can stop me, once I set my mind to it."

SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN



San Diego professor preserves history of Jonestown

Check out our Web exclusive online at www.cta.org/jonestown, where SDSU religious studies professor Rebecca Moore talks about her website, which offers a venue for updates and new insights about the tragedy at Jonestown.



University of San Diego

DIVISION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION
Programs for Educators



**Independent Study, Online and
Scheduled Classes REGISTERING NOW!**

Teaching & Coaching In a Diverse Society Series

- Managing Behavior
- Battling Drugs
- Nutrition and a Healthy Body
- Character Development
- Diversity and Its Educational Challenges
- Unconditional Acceptance

The Basic Elements of Athletic Coaching Series

- Motivation
- Teaching Athletic Skills
- Developing Effective Communication Skills
- Team Management
- Principles of Athletic Training
- Developing a Coaching Philosophy
- Risk Management

Art Series

Increase your ability to keep records, design lessons, do research and communicate effectively by enhancing your technology knowledge!

Teaching Art to Children

EDU 570AF

Art Attack

EDU 570CS

Teaching Classroom Art Lessons

EDU 570AT

Content Courses Series

Imagine receiving college credit for listening to the country's most engaging college professors from prestigious universities talk to you about your content area while at home, in your car or even exercising at the club. With our Content Course Series, this can be a reality! Just obtain selected DVDs, CDs or audio downloads produced by the renowned "The Teaching Company" that correspond to our one, two and three unit courses and you're on your way to increased knowledge and college credit.



- **Business & Economics**
- **Fine Arts & Music**
- **History - Ancient Medieval & Modern**
- **Literature & English Language**
- **Philosophy & Intellectual History**
- **Religion**
- **Science & Mathematics**
- **Social Sciences**

NEW! INDEPENDENT STUDY SERIES

You've Been Funded!!

How to fund classroom projects through grants and web-based resources

Web-Based Funding for Classroom Educators

EDU 537IO (3 Semester Units)

Developing and Implementing a Web-Based Funding Plan

EDU 537IP (1 Semester Unit)

Grant Writing Basics for Classroom Educators

EDU 537IQ (3 Semester Units)

Writing and Submitting a Grant Proposal

EDU 537IR (1 Semester Unit)

Looking for Scheduled Classes?

Sign-up online for local classes in your area! **Visit www.usd-online.org and click on Scheduled Classes link!**

*Prior district approval for salary advancement units is recommended and the responsibility of each student.
NOTE: One Semester Unit is equivalent to 15 hours.*

www.usd-online.org

Fall into Savings with a First Financial Auto Loan!



With a First Financial auto loan, you can take advantage of:

- ◆ New and pre-owned rates as low as 3.99% APR¹
- ◆ Additional discounts up to 1.00% APR
- ◆ No payment for first 90 days²
- ◆ Summer Skips³
- ◆ And more!

Drive home with more money in your pocket!

(800) 537-8491 ◆ www.ffcuh.org

FIRST FINANCIAL

C R E D I T ◆ U N I O N

Endorsed by:



All loans are subject to credit approval and all FFCU policies and procedures. Loan rates are based on credit history, collateral criteria and term of loan. Other terms and conditions subject to change without notice. APR=Annual Percentage Rate. ¹3.99% APR is for new and used auto loans up to 48 months. Representative example: A \$20,000 new or used auto loan at a fixed rate of 3.99% APR for 48 months would require 48 monthly payments of \$451.49. The rate reflects a 1.00% APR discount for automatic auto loan payments from a FFCU checking account. ²Loan Department approval required; deferrals may be affected by your credit history and other criteria. Interest still accrues. ³Requires application and Loan Department approval and is not available on loans secured by real estate. Call for complete details.

Save Even More with PALM:
Our Member-Exclusive
Auto Buying Service

Let our auto buying experts:

- ◆ Help you save thousands of dollars on your next vehicle purchase
- ◆ Find the perfect vehicle for you; you don't even have to visit the dealer!
- ◆ And much more!

Proudly Serving CTA Members for Over 75 Years!