

California EDUCATOR

California Teachers Association November 2011 Volume 16 Issue 3

1 IN 4 CHILDREN IN CALIFORNIA IS LIVING & LEARNING IN POVERTY

THEIR STORIES
BEGIN ON **PAGE 10**



A TEACHER'S EVOLUTION

A MEMBER'S JOURNEY
OVER 25 YEARS IN THE CLASSROOM
» PAGE 22



'Thank You, Teacher'

HEARTFELT NOTES
OF APPRECIATION
FROM FORMER STUDENTS
» PAGE 26



EXPERIENCES TO ENGAGE, ENRICH AND EXCITE.

Disney Youth Education Series programs take place in the information-rich setting of the Disney Parks in Florida and California to give students –and their teachers– a hands-on, educational adventure. This collection of guided field studies, available in Science, Arts & Humanities and Leadership & Careers, is accredited, standards-based and specifically designed to reinforce your classroom lessons. Practice teamwork, critical thinking and problem-solving skills as your group participates in one-of-a-kind moments that use the magic of Disney to make learning even more impactful.

Contact your youth travel planner, visit DisneyYES.com, or call 866-427-1224 to learn more about specially priced group tickets.

Disney
**Youth
Education
Series**

Enter to win a magical school assembly hosted by a Disney Imagineer at Scholastic.com/ImagineBig

FEATURES

Photo by George Neilson



10 LIVING AND LEARNING IN POVERTY

One in four California students lives in poverty. They face challenges every day that make it difficult to focus on learning. CTA members across the state recognize their struggles and are helping in innovative ways.

Photo by Scott Buschman



22 A TEACHER'S EVOLUTION

We follow the journey of English teacher Brooke Nicolls as she reflects on her 25 years of teaching and helps us answer the question: "Are good teachers born or made?"

IN THIS ISSUE

26 MAKING A DIFFERENCE

- 26 'Thank You, Teacher' Project
- 28 GLBT Conference perspectives

30 TAKING A STAND

- 30 CFA moves toward a strike
- 31 CTA pushes for Jobs Act passage
- 32 Educators help craft California's 'Blueprint for Great Schools'

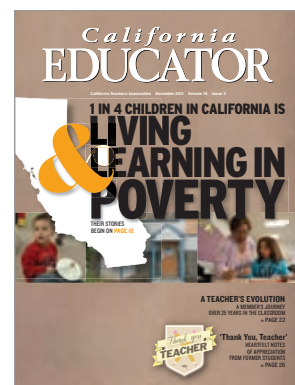
34 ACTION

- 34 CTA will lead the way in initiative battles ahead
- 35 Regions I and II leadership conferences
- 36 Ravitch to speak in California
- 38 Governor proposes 'hybrid' pension plan

42 ETC.

- 40 CTA Board expenses
- 42 Profile: Love Birds

ON THE COVER



- ▶ In Vallejo, Lynette Henley has seen a dramatic rise in the number of her students living in poverty. Now, she says, it's just a way of life.

The poor should be given a chance

I LIVED IN a poor household growing up in rural Chino. During those years my father was an itinerant farmhand, which until I was in about the fourth grade meant our family lived on the margins. I recall, when I was 8 years old and my brother 6, the two of us alone at home in the early morning before school lighting the gas pilot in the stove with a wadded piece of paper, trying to make breakfast. For some kids that's the reality of everyday life. They live with very little, alone much of the time because their parents are working hard to put food on the table — or worse, they're neglectful in other ways.

I've been thinking a lot lately about what an incredible disadvantage some of our students face and the harsh reality they wake to every single morning. Current numbers from the U.S. Census Bureau show that one in four children lives in poverty in California. That's so astounding and sad. Many of those underprivileged kids wake up in the mornings, like I did, to empty homes where parents have already left for work. Some wake up in motel rooms their family is sharing with another. And some wake up in shelters or on the street, having lost their home. These young people are being forced to grow up too fast with too little.

As educators, we may not know everything that goes on in our students' lives, but we know that what happens outside of school can be just as important to student success as what happens during the school day.

The first time I recognized poverty in my classroom was in Sacramento in 1972, where I came across kids who were so poor that they clearly weren't getting enough to eat. The only decent meals those kids had were maybe once a day from the school lunch program. You could see that they were sleep-deprived as well. How is a child supposed to learn under those difficult circumstances? The obstacles those students face, before they even reach school and open that first book, are enormous.



CTA President Dean E. Vogel

Our country is in a real crisis, with more and more people and children living in poverty each year. While corporate income has grown over 400 percent in the last seven years, personal income for most people has grown just 28 percent. There is so much money in this country, but most of it is at the top, leaving our most vulnerable to fend for themselves. One-third of our nation's wealth is held by the richest 1 percent. As the Occupy Wall Street movement spreads, local CTA associations are joining forces with protesters and speaking out publicly about how growing inequality and the concentration of corporate power and executive wealth undermine the foundations of our democracy. Repairing the problem means changing our state's tax structure to provide stable, adequate funding for California schools, colleges and essential social services. Public education is the way out of this recession and the way out of poverty for many of our students.

Generally speaking, the child born to the poorest family and the child born to the richest family have the same potential to succeed. Too often political leaders fail to recognize and support potential in the poor children and shrink from their responsibility to give them an equal chance. It's time to put a fair and equitable system in place, so that all of our students are given the chance to succeed and prosper. It's the only way to a better future for them, and for us.

California EDUCATOR

ACTING EDITOR	Dave Earl Carpenter
STAFF WRITER	Sherry Posnick-Goodwin
CTA WEB EDITOR	Karyn Ferrera Donhoff
CTA WEB EDITOR	Tiffany Hasker
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT	Craig Hamilton
WEB ASSISTANT	Tami Beseda
WEB ASSISTANT	Gladdie Cabral

CTA ELECTED OFFICERS

PRESIDENT	Dean E. Vogel
VICE PRESIDENT	Eric C. Heins
SECRETARY-TREASURER	Mikki Cichocki

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

José Alcalá, Larry Allen, E. Toby Boyd, Donald L. Bridge, Tyrone V. Cabell, Elana Davidson, Don Dawson, Dana Dillon, David Goldberg, Jim Groth, Terri Jackson, Marty G. Meeden, George Melendez, Theresa Montaña, Mary Rose Ortega, Cynthia Peña, Bonnie Shatun, Michael Stone, Kendall Vaught, KC Walsh, Curtis Washington

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

CONTRIBUTORS

Jennifer Baker, Amy Braden, Scott Buschman, Bill Guy, Stephen R. Harris III, Dina Martin, Mike Myslinski, Frank Wells

EDITORIAL INFORMATION

California Educator is published for the information and edification of CTA 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.

For advertising rates and information, contact WebSolutions Media
5666 Spruce Harbor Court, Las Vegas, NV 89122
(800) 585-9322
websol@earthlink.net, websolutionsmedia.com

CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year, Sept. 1–Aug. 31, are \$825, including a \$20 voluntary contribution. Up to \$18.45 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 per year, available to persons or institutions not eligible for CTA/NEA membership.

California Educator (ISSN 1091-6148) is published monthly except January, July and August for \$6.45 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.

CTA online

iPAD winners!
 Congratulations to the two winners of our iPads for taking the readership survey at cta.org.



Rob Garretson
 Cucamonga Teachers Association



Daniel Woo
 Napa Valley Education Association

▶ WHAT'S NEW AT CTA.ORG



November is American Indian Heritage Month

CTA recognizes and honors the contributions of peoples of American Indian descent during American Indian Heritage Month and year-round.

www.cta.org/AmericanIndian



CTA/ABC Committee: Making a difference for our chapters

The CTA Association for Better Citizenship is the political action arm of the Association, providing campaign funding for our local affiliates.

www.cta.org/ABC



CTA's involvement in the labor movement runs deep

Check our Labor History section for ways we can strengthen our resolve and reinvigorate the union movement.

www.cta.org/Labor

▶ VIRAL VIDEO



Occupy the DOE! Teachers, parents and school staff stage a protest at a meeting of the Panel for Education Policy (PEP), the appointed policy-making board of the New York City Department of Education.
youtu.be/YbmjMickJMA

TOP TWEET

@CATeachersAssoc
 #OWS We share your frustrations. We see the inequities. We want better for our country too. We are the 99%.

MOST POPULAR FACEBOOK POST

8 Nov | 212 likes, 31 shares
 Posted by CTA: Great news out of Ohio this evening! Voters have overturned the law signed last year by their governor that limited collective bargaining rights for public workers.

FAVORITE COMMENTS

Rebecca Pisano
 12:42 pm | 8 Nov
 I'm a student at Sac State and I stood out with my professors this morning! "Fewer classes, Higher Fees, the CSU is run by thieves!"

David B Cohen
 2:04pm | 1 Nov
 As stupid as the [LAUSD] lawsuit is, I'd kind of like to see it go to trial though. Let's put Eli Broad or any other plaintiff on the stand, put them under oath, find out about their motivations, their related political activities, and how they justify pursuing a policy that is contraindicated by the best research and professional organizations for educational measurement.



▶ GET CONNECTED TO CTA FOR ALL THE LATEST NEWS. BECOME A **FACEBOOK** FAN. FOLLOW US ON **TWITTER**. WATCH US ON **YOUTUBE!**

calendar

Reminder:

State Delegate declaration of candidacy forms for the 2012 NEA Representative Assembly in Washington, D.C., will appear in the **December 2011** issue of the *Educator*.



DEC
6-7

CONFERENCE

Secondary Literacy Summit XI *Anaheim Marriott Hotel, Anaheim*

"Linking Literacy to College and Career Readiness." Sessions highlight best practices for improving adolescent literacy as well as instructional strategies for closing achievement gaps for English learners and students with special needs. Presentations feature secondary school teams that are improving literacy achievement for all students. The summit is sponsored by CTA, Association of California School Administrators (ACSA), California Department of Education, California Comprehensive Center at WestEd, and Center for the Advancement of Reading at CSU.

www.cacompcenter.org/secondaryliteracy ACSA Educational Services, (650) 692-4300 or (800) 672-3494

JAN
6

NOMINATION DEADLINE

CTA Human Rights Awards

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. 6. The awards will be presented March 3 at the Equity and Human Rights Conference.

www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Awards



JAN
13

ENTRY DEADLINE

César E. Chávez Awards

The César E. Chávez Memorial Education Awards Program provides recognition for students and their teachers who demonstrate an understanding of César E. Chávez's vision and guiding principles. Submit written essays (no biographies) or visual arts projects. Entries must be completed by one student or a group of no more than five students in conjunction with a CTA member who is employed at the same school. A CTA member may submit up to five individual entries or one group entry. Grade levels range from pre-K (artwork only) to higher education (undergraduates only). Top prize winners will receive \$1,000 for students (shared by submitters of a group entry) and CTA members.

www.cta.org/About-CTA/CTA-Foundation/Scholarships



JAN
13

NOMINATION DEADLINE

CTA State Gold Awards

State Gold Awards may be bestowed upon any person or organization whose leadership, acts and support have had a positive statewide impact on public education in California. Awards are given in two nonmember categories: business, and non-profit/community organization. Any CTA affiliate or individual member may place a name in nomination. The nomination form must be accompanied by supporting materials and submitted to the CTA Communications Committee.

The nomination form may be downloaded from

www.cta.org/Professional-Development/Awards.



DECEMBER

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

JANUARY 2012

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

FEBRUARY

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

JAN
13-15

CONFERENCE

Issues Conference *Rio Hotel, Las Vegas*

"Standing as One – Determining the Future of Public Education." This conference provides an opportunity for rural, urban and ESP educators with diverse interests and perspectives to reconnect with fellow educators, re-energize their skillset and help strategize solutions to confront the challenges they face together.

www.cta.org/conferences



Rio Hotel, Las Vegas

JAN
20

EVENT

Diane Ravitch Speaking Tour *Sacramento Convention Center*

Hosted by the Sacramento City Teachers Association (SCTA) and other local CTA chapters, author and education expert Diane Ravitch will speak in Sacramento. Call SCTA for tickets: (916) 452-4591.

Ravitch will also be speaking in Los Angeles Jan. 17 and San Francisco Jan. 18. See page 36 for details.



Online learning for your life



Have You Visited NEA Academy's New Interactive Website?

Your input helped guide the design of the NEA Academy's new website, and we think you'll be pleased with the results. Come explore the site and fill out your personal profile. Based on the preferences you select, this new interactive learning environment will provide content recommendations, course alerts, and additional material of specific interest to you. We invite you to see the all-new NEA Academy at neaacademy.org.



Let Us Count the Ways . . . to a Master's Degree

- 50 master's degree programs in Curriculum and Instruction, Administration, Counseling, and General
- Three leading universities – UMassOnline (University of Massachusetts), Walden University, and Western Governors University
- 5 to 20% discounts on course tuition plus waivers of some fees
- NEA member-only scholarships for eligible applicants

NEA Academy's University Partners

NEA Academy's university partners were selected after a nationwide review of higher education institutions and advanced degree programs for educators. Visit the Academy's website, neaacademy.org, for more information about each of these outstanding institutions and their special benefits for NEA members.

The Richard W. Riley
College of Education and Leadership
WALDEN UNIVERSITY



UMassOnline
University of Massachusetts
Amherst Boston Dartmouth Lowell Worcester

@neaacademy
Online learning for your life
neaacademy.org

FEB
3

SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINE

CTA Scholarships

Applications for the 2012 CTA Scholarship program must be postmarked by **Friday, Feb. 3**. The program offers up to 35 \$5,000 scholarships for dependent children of CTA members, including the Ralph J. Flynn Memorial Scholarship for the highest-scoring applicant; the Del A. Weber Scholarship, one \$5,000 scholarship for a dependent child of a CTA member attending continuation high school or an alternative education program; up to five \$3,000 scholarships for CTA members, including members working on an emergency credential; and the L. Gordon Bittle Memorial Scholarship, providing up to three \$3,000 scholarships for Student CTA members.

www.cta.org/About-CTA/CTA-Foundation/Scholarships



FEB
3-5

CONFERENCE

Good Teaching Conference North *Marriott, San Jose Convention Center*

The CTA Good Teaching Conference is designed to support excellent teaching and learning practices for classroom teachers. Offering a variety of 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.

www.cta.org/conferences

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.

DT051111

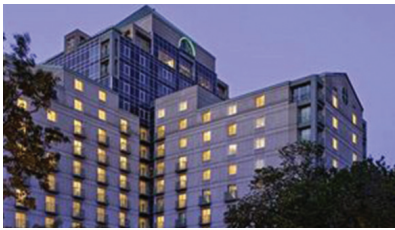
FEB
24-26

CONFERENCE

CLMS/CLHS Annual Conference North Hyatt Regency, Sacramento

The California League of Schools, encompassing the California League of Middle Schools and the California League of High Schools, presents an annual conference offering high-quality professional development. The Annual Conference North offers over 85 sessions on improving student achievement, content areas, RTI, PLCs, differentiated instruction, integrated technology, data analysis, classroom management, API/AYP strategies, and more. Featured speakers are Dr. Ruby Payne and Dr. Debbie Silver.

www.leagueofschools.org/events/north.htm



Hyatt Regency, Sacramento

For the **difference**
you make.

Coordinate with co-workers while on the move and keep up with family near and far. Get instant savings on monthly plans from where you work. Discounts for Current California Education Employees.

Sprint
All Together. Now.™

Save 18%

Select regularly priced
monthly service plans
Requires a new two-year Agreement.

Shop Online:

K-12 Education:

www.sprint.com/california12education

Higher Education:

www.sprint.com/californiahighereducation

Shop at any retail Sprint Store:

www.sprint.com/storelocator

Bring your employee ID or pay stub
and mention code:

K-12 Education: **GAEDU_SCA_WS_ZZZ**

Higher Education: **GAUNV_SCA_WS_ZZZ**



Existing Sprint customers
please call **1-866-853-4931**
to add your discount

May require up to a \$36 activation fee/line, credit approval and deposit. Up to \$200 early termination fee/line applies. Individual-Liability Discount: Available only to eligible employees of the company or organization participating in the discount program or Government agencies participating in employee discount pricing with Sprint. May be subject to change according to organization's agreement with Sprint. Available upon request on select plans and only for eligible lines. Discount applies to monthly service charges only. No discounts apply to add-ons \$29.99 or below. Other Terms: Coverage not available everywhere. Nationwide Sprint and Nextel National Networks reach over 277 and 278 million people, respectively. Sprint 4G network reaches over 70 markets and counting, on select devices. The Sprint 3G network reaches over 272 million people. Offers not available in all markets/retail locations or for all phones/networks. Pricing, offer terms, fees and features may vary for existing customers not eligible for upgrade. Other restrictions apply. See store or sprint.com for details. ©2011 Sprint. Sprint and the logo are trademarks of Sprint. MOTOROLA and the Stylized M Logo are registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office. Research In Motion, the RIM logo, BlackBerry, the BlackBerry logo and SureType are registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office and may be pending or registered in other countries - these and other marks of Research In Motion Limited are used with permission. The HTC logo and HTC EVO are trademarks of HTC Corporation. Other marks are the property of their respective owners. 14850

Benefits you'll value. Service you'll appreciate.

This California Teachers Association Platinum Plus® Visa® card is a valuable financial tool you can count on for all your purchasing needs. Apply today, and you'll enjoy 24-hour service from courteous, helpful representatives; quick, secure online access to your account; around-the-clock fraud protection; zero liability for fraudulent charges; additional cards for others you trust; and cash access at ATMs worldwide.



24 / 7 SERVICE | SECURITY PROTECTION | ONLINE ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT

To apply, call toll-free **1.877.518.9005**

Mention Priority Code VAARK4. You can also visit www.newcardonline.com

and enter Priority Code VAARK4.

Brought to you by:

Bank of America

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

*The \$0 Liability Guarantee covers fraudulent purchases and payments made by others using your account. To be covered, don't share personal or account information with anyone. Claims may only be filed against posted and settled transactions subject to dollar limits and verification, including providing all requested information supporting fraudulent use claim.

This credit card program is issued and administered by FIA Card Services, N.A. 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. Platinum Plus is a registered trademark of FIA Card Services, N.A. Bank of America and the Bank of America logo are registered trademarks of Bank of America Corporation.

LIVING & LEARNING IN POVERTY

KLAMATH-TRINITY
TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

VALLEJO EDUCATION

REDWOOD CITY
TEACHERS ASSO

Stories by **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**
Photos by **Scott Buschman**
Research assistance by **Amy Braden**

► Thanksgiving is coming, and Maria Cortez worries that there will be no feast for her family.

Her husband lost his job, and her day care business has dried up because so many in her neighborhood are unemployed. She lives in La Puente in a one-bedroom unit built in the back of a house with her husband and three teenage children.



Maria Cortez

CORTEZ TEARFULLY SAYS that she tells her children they must eat less, so items they receive from the local food bank will last longer. Last year she received a Thanksgiving food basket from Family Resource Center of Rowland Unified School District, where her children attend school.

“I don’t know what we will have to eat for Thanksgiving this year,” Cortez tells Jennifer Kottke, the center’s grant program coordinator, who is visiting to make sure the family is doing OK.

Kottke, a member of the Association of Rowland Educators, says it is difficult for the center to meet the rising needs of students and their families. “Some days are very hard,” she says. “We are seeing more and more families living in poverty.”

Kottke is not alone. CTA members throughout the state say there are more poor, hungry and homeless families in their schools. Yet despite increasing poverty, schools are expected to close the achievement gap single-handedly. Studies show poverty impacts academic achievement, but most schools have decreased services and programs helping poor students — even though they are more impacted by budget cuts than wealthier students. Meanwhile, billionaires such as Bill Gates and Eli Broad demand business-driven “reforms” to raise test scores, blame “bad teachers,” and continue to ignore the effects of poverty.

Poverty may be the elephant in the room, but the “Occupy Wall Street” movement is prompting new conversations about equity,

ACROSS CALIFORNIA POVERTY IS ON THE RISE. We see the effects of it in our schools every day. In this feature we take a look at how poverty, along with the emotional, psychological and physical baggage it brings, takes a toll on learning. You will meet some very courageous and determined students and the parents who are struggling to make ends meet. And you will meet some pretty awesome educators who are there for their students and their families in ways that will inspire you.

INSIDE THIS FEATURE:

- 13** **IN THE SHADOW OF 'THE HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH'** Even in Anaheim, the home of Disneyland, many families live in impoverished conditions.
- 14** **A SCHOOL FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS** At the Monarch School in downtown San Diego, homeless students find a safe and nurturing environment to learn.
- 17** **POVERTY CLEARLY AFFECTS CHILDREN'S READINESS** Diane Ravitch, author of numerous books on education including *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*, shares her views on the impact of poverty on education.
- 20** **GIVING DISADVANTAGED KIDS AN 'EVEN START'** A preschool in La Puente helps children from low-income families catch up with their more affluent peers.

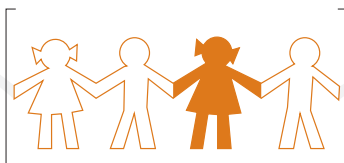
ASSOCIATION
CIATION

- ASSOCIATION OF ROWLAND EDUCATORS
- ANAHEIM EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS (ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY)
- ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATORS CTA/NEA



ABOVE: Jennifer Kottke, grant coordinator for the Family Resource Center of Rowland Unified School District, has seen more people in her school community going without food and basic necessities, including Maria Cortez (opposite page).

1 IN 4 CHILDREN IN CALIFORNIA LIVES IN POVERTY.





ABOVE: Redwood City Teachers Association President Bret Baird says the middle class is rapidly disappearing in Redwood City.



ABOVE: Vallejo Education Association member Lynette Henley says her students are increasingly worried about where they will sleep and what they will eat.

Poverty is no longer the exception; it's just a way of life.

Lynette Henley

tax fairness and corporate greed. Despite having the eighth-largest economy in the world, the Golden State does little to care for its underprivileged members.

POVERTY IS SPREADING RAPIDLY

An estimated 2.2 million children in California — one in four — lived in poverty last year, according to new U.S. Census data. The number of Californians living in poverty increased to nearly 6 million — more than the populations of most states. Children of color are four times more likely than white children to be born into the

most “economically fragile” households, with 69 percent of Latinos and 71 percent of African Americans categorized as “income poor,” compared with 32 percent of whites, according to a new report from the Center for Community Economic Development.



California ranks 40th in the nation in child homelessness (where 50th is worst), according to the National Center on Family Homelessness. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Improvement Act of 2001, part of No Child Left Behind, defines this as living in cars, motels, shelters, campgrounds or “shared housing.”

School districts, says Kottke, have been trying to pick up the slack, and the Family Resource Center offers food, clothing, tutoring, mental health referrals, and programs ranging from preschool to mentoring. There are also dental and health care clinics for students and families. But grant money is drying up for her center — and similar ones throughout the state — that help alleviate suffering.

Educators throughout the state believe things are getting worse.

“Kids are worrying about where they are going to sleep tonight, whether dinner is going to be a bowl of cereal or a bowl of rice, whether they will have clean clothes, how they will get school supplies,” says Lynette Henley, a member of the Vallejo Education Association who teaches at Hogan Middle School. “When I first started teaching here 30 years ago, you had a kid here or there living in poverty. Now, at least 15 kids in my class are poor. Poverty is no longer the exception; it’s just a way of life.”

Unemployment, home foreclosures, and the closure of a naval base have hurt Vallejo badly, says Henley. “You have people losing their homes due to foreclosure, and you have more evictions because people can’t

WHAT IS POVERTY?

Poverty is defined by the federal government as families with children having an income below \$44,100, even though most families need much more than that amount to survive in California, which has an extremely high cost of living.

Another indicator of poverty is the number of children who qualify for free and reduced-price meals at school. Last year, 281,696 more public school students were eligible, representing a 9 percent increase in eligibility over a three-year period, according to www.kidsdata.org, a research branch of the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children’s Health. In Oakland, where 70 percent of students qualify, some schools are even offering dinner.

Poverty means a lack of access to health care. California cut the Healthy Families program, and nearly 1 million children in the program must pay more for visits to health care

providers. Emergency rooms are taking up the slack for medical and dental care emergencies, according to a UCLA study.

While the stereotype may be that parents living in poverty choose not to work, the reality is that most are working poor. Data from the National Center for Children in Poverty shows 48 percent of children in low-income families in California have at least one parent who is employed full-time, year round, and that 35 percent of children have at least one parent employed part of the year or part-time. Only 18 percent of children in low-income families do not have an employed parent.

story continued on page 16 ►

IN THE SHADOW OF 'THE HAPPIEST PLACE ON EARTH'

Orange County may be famous for Disneyland, beaches and mansions, but it is shocking to see the impoverished conditions many students live in.

Manuel Rangel and Leticia Martinez live in the shadow of Disneyland, "the Happiest Place on Earth," but their living conditions are anything but happy. The couple and their three children, ages 1, 4 and 7, all live together in a single bedroom because it's all they can afford. The second bedroom in their apartment is rented to others.

The family is part of the growing trend of "multifamily housing," where families occupy one bedroom of a house or apartment to live cheaply. Families also crowd into motel rooms. These living arrangements are becoming the norm as the economy worsens, says Consuelo Garcia, a community outreach teacher on special assignment at Paul Revere Elementary School.

On a recent visit, Garcia stops by to make sure the family has food, clothing and other basic necessities. Brandon, 7, has been having some emotional problems, and she makes a referral for him to receive counseling at Paul Revere.

Garcia, a member of the Anaheim Elementary Education Association (AEEA), translates for the family so they can describe what it is like to be poor in one of the wealthiest places in the world.

"It's really difficult to pay the bills," says Rangel, who lost his job as a mechanic. Martinez supports the family working as a cook from 3 a.m. to 2 p.m., and she also helps prepare food for lunch trucks. Their neighborhood is gang-infested. Their car was

broken into. They don't venture out at night unless absolutely necessary. Rangel hopes things will improve one day and he can have his own business. Meanwhile, he takes care of the children, who barely see their mother.

Jaime Ramirez, a fourth-grade teacher at Mann Elementary School, says most of his students have never been to Disneyland or even the beach, about 20 miles away. Some of them have confided to him that they just stay in their rented bedroom all day on weekdays, because they don't know the other people who are living in the house. They feel uncomfortable spending time in the living room or kitchen.

Some of his students are practically being raised by their siblings, since their parents are working more than one job. It's not unusual for teens to attend back-to-school night for younger brothers and sisters because parents are unavailable.

The school is trying to involve parents to a greater extent by encouraging them to visit during the day and participate in school activities.

"We have parent trainings to teach them what their kids are learning, how to understand standards-based report cards, and how they can help their children with homework," says Ramirez. "It must be helping,

because our API is improving every year."

Janine Raney, a fifth-grade teacher at Paul Revere Elementary, sometimes visits her students at home. "I see mattresses leaning up against the wall, with multiple children sleeping on one mattress," she says. "That's just Anaheim. I don't think most of my friends realize that severe poverty exists near Disneyland."

Raney says most of her students are English learners and 90 percent receive free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch at school. She mentions a student who was suspended last year for bad behavior – his mother called and asked if she could still bring him to school to eat lunch.

"You realize there's a need there if the mom is thinking he won't eat lunch."

Her students lack basic school supplies, too. "If you ask them to color in a diagram for a science project, most will say they don't have colored pencils, scissors, glue or crayons. I never send anything home that has to be mandatorily cut or pasted."

"It's very loud and chaotic," says Raney. "You can have five to seven people watching TV on a couch in a studio apartment, and a few kids trying to do homework."

Jose Magcalas, a history teacher at Loara High School in Anaheim, grew up in the neighborhood where he teaches. The Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association member says that drugs are tempting for older students living in difficult conditions. Medical marijuana dispensaries have located in the area, and he believes students gain access to pot from relatives and friends.

"I believe a lot of kids want to ditch school and do drugs when their parents aren't home."

Magcalas tries to expose his students to the larger world through field trips. He helped raise funds to send a dozen students to Washington for the inauguration of President Obama. But there are fewer opportunities for students, since there have been so many cutbacks in his school. The International Baccalaureate program was eliminated two years ago, and other programs are on the chopping block.

"I think it's time for poverty to be addressed as an issue," he says. "During these worsening economic times, schools need to help out. But to be honest, schools can't do everything."



Consuelo Garcia



ABOVE: Members of this Anaheim family share one bedroom to save money. They are Manuel Rangel, Leticia Martinez, and children Brandon, 7, Hilary, 4, and Melanie, 1.

A SCHOOL FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

Yeseina is a half hour late walking into her class at Monarch School in downtown San Diego. Her teacher, Stephen Keiley, looks concerned and not one bit annoyed.

"Welcome," he says, smiling warmly. "Why are you late?"

"I woke up late," replies the youngster.

Keiley nods understandingly and asks if she has had breakfast. She tells him she has already eaten and settles down for a math lesson in the combination fourth- and fifth-grade class.

Yeseina is homeless, and so are all of her classmates and students attending Monarch

food and health care. Many have been exposed to violence and adult relatives with mental health or substance abuse problems. For them, the year-round K-12 school is a safe haven.

"I love it here," says 14-year-old Noelle. "It feels like family. I feel comfortable here."

Students may switch shelters or motels, but many find some stability at Monarch, a school that provides meals, showers, laundry facilities and a clothes closet. The school has

partnerships with health care providers for vision and dental services, and a clinic is slated to open on campus. Doors open at 6:30 a.m. since shelters close early, and many students stay until 5 or 6 p.m., when the shelters reopen. Family dinners are held two nights a week. Students are given free passes to take the trolley or bus to school from throughout San Diego County, and some travel many miles to get to school each day. It's worth it, say students, because Monarch is the closest thing to having a home.

have after-school programs where kids can do homework, yoga and dance classes."

The school was founded in 2001 and is located in a renovated warehouse. The population has grown by 75 percent since 2009 due to a worsening economy, and the school will be moving to a larger facility next year to meet rising demand. It is one of the few schools for homeless children in the nation. Federal law mandates that public schools allow homeless students to stay enrolled even when they leave the attendance boundaries so they are

not segregated from other students. However, Monarch School was given a waiver and is allowed to serve only students who are homeless. If families find permanent housing, students can finish out the school year.

Staff members say the alternative campus helps meet students' needs in ways that traditional schools may not, and students don't have to worry about being teased by other students about being homeless or dirty, having body odor, or wearing old clothes. Some students say that at other schools they were

They are living lives of trauma, and there is no soft-selling that.

Stacy Bermingham

embarrassed to be living in motels and told other students they were on vacation.

"The majority of the kids here are two to three grade levels behind," says Keiley, a Teacher of the Year in San Diego County. "They arrive here deficient in reading and math and other basics. They have had gaps in their education. Part of homelessness is moving around, and when you're transient, you're often



ABOVE: Monarch math and science teacher Karen Daley helps Dezarae, a homeless student, figure out a math problem.

School. So members of the Association of Educators CTA/NEA who teach here are flexible. They know punctuality can be a challenge for students if they are sleeping in a shelter, motel room or car with their family.

They may look like any other students, but those attending Monarch face obstacles unimaginable to most of us. They may lack

that Monarch provides to students and their families," says high school math and science teacher Karen Daley, who began teaching at the school last January. "We have 'shopping day' here at the school where students can get toiletries including shampoo and conditioner or clothes that are nearly new. It's almost like having a store at school. We also

IDENTIFYING HOMELESS STUDENTS

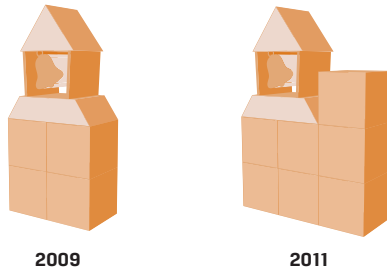
All districts are required to have a homeless liaison, whose purpose is to ensure that children continue their schooling despite not having an address.

(Source: Barbara Duffield, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth)

If teachers suspect a student is homeless, they should contact their district's homeless liaison for assistance.

- ✓ **TALKING ABOUT HAVING TO MOVE OR STAYING IN DIFFERENT PLACES**
- ✓ **FALLING ASLEEP IN CLASS**
- ✓ **LOOKING UNWASHED**
- ✓ **ASKING TO BORROW FOOD FROM OTHER CHILDREN OR "FOOD HOARDING"**
- ✓ **WEARING THE SAME CLOTHING THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**
- ✓ **EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM**
- ✓ **DISCONNECTED TELEPHONE**

MONARCH SCHOOL POPULATION INCREASE



The school's student population, made up entirely of homeless children, has grown by 75 percent from 2009 to 2011 due to a worsening economy.

missing school."

Students typically gain a year of academic achievement for every six months at Monarch through intensive interventions, says Principal Joel Garcia, and they are assessed every 100 days in language, reading and math. For high school students, the emphasis can also be on "credit recovery" so they graduate on time or earn their GED.

"Our school is about educating the whole child," says reading specialist Stacy Bermingham, who has been at the campus six years. "We make sure every child receives love, care and attention. Students know there are adults here that they can rely on. We don't take for granted that our children have had a good night's sleep, or been fed, or had any sort of consistency in their lives. They are living lives of trauma, and there is no soft-selling that."

Schools like Monarch are necessary, says Bermingham, because society no longer takes care of those who cannot fend for themselves.

MORE INFO

To learn more about the school or to contribute to the foundation, visit www.monarchschoools.org.

Noelle, 14, says her family has been "struggling" for quite some time.

For the past two months she has lived in a motel room with her mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, 1-year-old brother and 6-year-old sister.

"Honestly, it's complicated," she says. "We live in a little area, and it's very stressful. I sleep with my grandma and my little sister. There are two beds there."

Being homeless, she says, is constantly worrying about having a place to stay and enough to eat. She experiences anxiety and says she has an ulcer.

Before enrolling in Monarch School in San Diego, she had attended 10 other schools and had poor grades. "I was failing because of the stress," she says, choking back tears. "I couldn't focus on things because of my family situation."

At other schools, students made fun of her for being homeless. "I felt like a nobody and a failure," she relates. "I missed four years of school because I was badly bullied. But here I don't feel like a failure. At Monarch, I'm somebody."

Noelle is now staying after school to receive special "academic support" to bring up her grades. She is doing her best to turn things around so she can graduate, join the Marines and go to college. She would like to be a photographer, and the school has a fund to buy her a camera.

"I have a lot of friends here at Monarch," she says. "I love it here. This is the longest I've ever stayed at a school because I like coming here."

NOELLE



Fabian, 17, has lived at three shelters in two years with his mother and two brothers, and says living in shelters is "hectic."

Currently his entire family is renting a studio apartment from a friend. For a time his family owned a home near Riverside. But Fabian broke his arm and his mother broke her legs, and without health insurance the family went through its savings and lost their home.

He attended 15 schools before arriving at Monarch one year ago. He likes that it's a small place with caring adults, and that students are immediately welcoming and nonjudgmental.

"I find it very comforting," he says. "Nobody puts you down, and everybody co-exists. I have a bigger interest in school. I am doing my assignments and reading the material and doing my homework. I like my teachers, too."

Lots of people, he says, have the wrong idea about the kinds of people who are homeless.

"Not all homeless kids sleep on the street," says Fabian. "A lot of kids become homeless and become depressed. I try to stay optimistic. It's just another journey and another path. It has made me become more independent. I'm definitely going to college and having a career."

FABIAN





ABOVE: Monarch teacher Stacy Bermingham watches Angel problem-solving on the Smart Board.



ABOVE: Maggie Peters works with students in the Hoopa Reservation.

afford to pay rent. And you have renters having to leave because their landlord is going through foreclosure, so you have secondhand victims of foreclosure. I overhear conversations of kids about moving in with their grandmother or living with an aunt, saying they have to move. There are a lot of disconnected telephones when I call.”

In Redwood City, a suburb about 20 miles from San Francisco, most students are either affluent or poor, and the middle class is rapidly disappearing, says Bret Baird, a physical education teacher at Kennedy Middle School and president of the Redwood City Teachers Association.

“More students are living in crowded quarters,” he says. “I’ve gone on home visits at night, and you see two and three families living in a one or two bedroom place. Parents are working two or three jobs. It’s eye-opening. You think your reality is everyone else’s reality until you find out it isn’t. It makes me think twice about having students

doing homework at home when they have no quiet place to do so.”

June Garland, director of community services and support in Newport-Mesa Unified School District, verifies addresses of new enrollees and makes visits. She has seen children living in storage units, backyard sheds, and the garage of someone’s home.

“We also have a lot of what we call ‘unaccompanied youths,’” she says. “These are kids who are 16 or 17 and a parent has thrown them out on the street. Many of them are too old for foster care.”

“Food is a huge issue,” reports Pamela Hosmer, program manager for the Children and Youth in Transition program in San Diego Unified School District. “A lot of organizations and nonprofits that provide food are tapped out. Last year, Feed America provided nine of our elementary schools with weekly bags of food for children to bring home to supplement their nutrition on weekends. We need to do this. If kids are hungry, they can’t learn.”

SUFFERING IS WIDESPREAD

While poverty has traditionally been viewed as an urban issue, it hugely impacts rural areas.

“Klamath-Trinity Joint Unified School District has a 100 percent free meal program for all students,” says Maggie Peters, an eighth-grade math and science teacher at Hoopa Elementary School, located in the Hoopa Reservation. “All our students get breakfast and lunch at school year-round.”

More than 80 percent of the district’s students are Native American, many born into “generational poverty,” says Peters, who is president of the Klamath-Trinity Teachers Association. “Poverty is directly correlated with education, and in impoverished, rural

Food is a huge issue. A lot of organizations and nonprofits that provide food are tapped out.

Pamela Hosmer



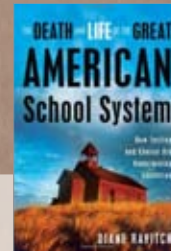


Photo by George Nelson

Q&A

RAVITCH: 'POVERTY CLEARLY AFFECTS CHILDREN'S READINESS'

Diane Ravitch, author of numerous books on education including *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education*, and research professor of education at New York University, shares her views with the *Educator* on the impact of poverty on education.



How do you see poverty impacting students, and how does poverty in general affect learning?

Poverty clearly affects children's readiness to learn and their success on standardized tests. We know this because the achievement gap exists before children enter school. Some children have consistent access to good nutrition, good medical care, educated parents, safe and healthy neighborhoods — and some don't. All of this affects children's readiness to learn. We know that economic conditions affect test scores, because every testing program shows differential success in relation to family income: children from affluent families have the highest scores, and children whose families have the least income have the lowest scores. This reflects different experiences and different access to opportunity.

Why is overcoming poverty never talked about as a way to improve student achievement?

It was talked about for many years, but in the present climate the school "reform" narrative is led by millionaires and billionaires who believe that schools can eliminate poverty by privatizing management, giving more tests, merit pay, closing schools, and other carrots and sticks. The free market works for them, so they want to bring the free market to education. They don't seem to realize that the free market has many losers — like the millions now in poverty — and they don't want to talk about growing income inequality. They prefer to steer the national conversation to teacher evaluation and charter schools. One does not hear them complain about massive budget cuts to education or its negative consequences for children in

poverty and our education system. The very things that these children need most are now out of reach, and the corporate reformers are silent about that.

Some children have consistent access to good nutrition, good medical care, educated parents... and some don't. All of this affects children's readiness to learn.

Diane Ravitch

How should schools teach students who are poor?

Schools that have students who are poor need smaller classes, intensive tutoring for those who require it, science projects, up-to-date technology, opportunities to write, guidance for students and parents (social workers), and classes in the arts to enrich children's lives. The school and campus should be physically beautiful, sending a message that they are valued and respected. They should have experienced teachers who are kind, compassionate, and ready to help them maneuver personal and social crises.

To read the entire interview with Diane Ravitch, visit www.cta.org/RavitchQA.

communities, families are largely impacted by drug and alcohol addiction, depression, neglect, abuse, and health issues such as diabetes. This, compounded by the lack of sufficient social services to address the needs of the community, creates generations of students who struggle simply to function in the classroom, which results in decreasing educational success and continues the cycle of poverty."

As the economy worsens and tuition rises, college students are finding themselves destitute, hoping their sacrifice will pay off upon graduation with a new career.

"I can only imagine how it will feel to finally have a job where I can support my children in a home of my own and have financial security," says Deanna Herrin,



ABOVE: Stephen Keiley, San Diego County Teacher of the Year.

For information about upcoming Ravitch speaking events sponsored by CTA chapters, please see our related story on page 36. ▶

a student at Riverside Community College and a member of Student CTA.

Herrin has recently divorced and is renting rooms from relatives. She has applied for financial assistance. If her car breaks down, she fears, she won't be able to commute to campus, an hour away.

"The only way I can support myself and my children is by getting a degree. It's taking longer than I thought it would take. But I'm hoping that once I transfer and earn a bachelor's degree, I'll get a job."

OBSTACLES CREATED BY POVERTY

Poor children are just as capable of success as affluent students, but they face more obstacles.

"They are not read to aloud as often or exposed to complex language and large vocabularies," says Richard Rothstein, a former research associate of Economic Policy Institute and an education author. "Their parents have low-wage jobs and are more



ABOVE: Jaime Ramirez works one-on-one with Victor Torres at Mann School in Anaheim.

frequently laid off, causing family stress and more arbitrary discipline. The neighborhoods through which these children walk to school and in which they play have more crime and drugs and fewer adult role models with professional careers. Such children are more often in single-parent families and so get less adult attention. They have fewer cross-country trips, visits to museums and zoos, music or dance lessons, and organized sports leagues to develop their ambition, cultural awareness and self-confidence. Each of these disadvantages makes only a small contribution to the achievement gap, but cumulatively, they explain a lot."

Multiple studies show children living in poverty are at greater risk of emotional

problems including anxiety, depression and low self-esteem. Chronic stress has been shown to adversely affect concentration and memory in children, which can impact their ability to learn.

"Our kids feel more stress," says Anaheim Elementary Education Association member Sara Camm, a sixth-grade teacher at Orange Grove Elementary School, which serves low-socioeconomic students. "Students come to school upset. They say their parents are fighting all the time. Parents are trying to make ends meet and don't intend for their actions to stress out their kids, but it happens."

Children in low-income families are more prone to asthma, resulting in sleeplessness, irritability and lack of exercise, which can result in obesity, say studies. As a result, they are absent more.

"Poverty clearly affects children's readiness to learn and their success on standard-

LOW-INCOME STUDENTS DEPRIVED OF EQUAL EDUCATION

A report from UCLA's Institute for Democracy, Education and Access shows that California's low-income students suffer disproportionately compared to more affluent students. Among findings:

- ▶ California schools serving 90 percent more Latino, African American and Native American students are the most likely to be critically overcrowded.
- ▶ High-poverty schools are almost three times as likely as low-poverty schools to eliminate summer school outright.
- ▶ Teacher layoffs are more than four times as likely to be reported at high-poverty schools as low-poverty schools.
- ▶ Budget cuts affect access to learning materials, which parents of poor students can't afford.
- ▶ Programs outside the instructional core (of reading and math) have been cut back or eliminated, with many costs shifted to parents.
- ▶ Local strategies aimed at filling budget gaps are likely to exacerbate inequalities. On average, low-poverty schools in the study have received \$167,797 in donations, or roughly eight times as much as high-poverty schools, which have received \$21,319.



ABOVE: Janine Ranes helps student Adrian Preciado at Paul Revere Elementary School in Anaheim.

ized tests,” says education expert and author Diane Ravitch. “The achievement gap exists before children enter school. Some children have consistent access to good nutrition, good medical care, educated parents, safe and healthy neighborhoods — and some don’t. All of this affects children’s readiness to learn.

We know that economic conditions affect test scores, because every testing program shows differential success in relation to family income: Children from affluent families have the highest scores, and children whose families have the least income have the lowest scores. This reflects different experiences and different access to opportunity.”

Research from Gerald Bracey shows America’s scores are low in comparison with other countries — only when there is a high percentage of children who are living in poverty. His research found that American students attending schools with low poverty rates actually did quite well.

Poverty has been linked to lower reading levels by www.kidsdata.org. Statewide, just 30 percent of economically disadvantaged children scored proficient or higher on the state’s English-language arts stan-

dardized test. Students in higher-income families did twice as well. Low-income students also score lower on Advanced Placement test scores.

When poor students only attend school with other poor students, achievement is impacted.

“Many students are burdened with going to economically segregated schools, where almost every student is poor,” says Ravitch. “This depresses their motivation, since they are surrounded by a community that has been left behind.”

EDUCATION CUTS HURT POOR CHILDREN MORE

According to the California Budget Project, California ranks 46th in the U.S. in K-12 spending per student, having spent \$2,856 less per student than the rest of the U.S. last year. In the past four years, California has cut \$20 billion from schools and colleges. This has had a greater impact on students who are poor and already at a disadvantage.

Poor students whose parents are not college educated benefit the most from counselor services. However, 29 California school districts have no counseling program at all, according to the California Department of Education. The ratio of students per counselor in this state is 945-to-1, compared with the national average of 477-to-1, ranking California last in the nation.

A report from UCLA’s Institute for Democracy, Education and Access shows that California’s low-income students suffer disproportionately compared with more affluent students (see sidebar).

“The findings point to tremendous needs of California students and California public schools — needs that the federal government is best positioned to address in the short term,” concludes the report. “The short term is crucial for the millions of students who can’t wait for the economy to improve. They only get one chance to have a high-quality and equal education. But California also needs to



ABOVE: Deanna Herrin, a Student CTA member who just applied for public assistance, with her children.

reform its system for funding public schools.”

TIME TO TACKLE POVERTY

Today’s “no excuses” philosophy from politicians and wealthy financiers ignores the impact of poverty on education and implies schools alone are responsible for raising student achievement. Those who espouse this ideology — including billionaires Bill Gates and Eli Broad — expect nothing of society and everything of schools, which is neither fair nor realistic, says Rothstein.

“Nobody should be forced to choose between advocating for better schools and speaking out for greater social and economic equality,” he says. “Both are

Poverty and how it affects students and their families is an issue we can no longer afford to ignore.

Dean Vogel

poverty by privatizing management, giving more tests, merit pay, closing schools, and other carrots and sticks,” says Ravitch. “The free market works for them, so they want to bring the free market to education. They don’t seem to realize that the free market has many losers — like the millions now in pov-

erty — and they don’t want to talk about growing income inequality. They prefer to steer the national conversation to teacher evaluation and charter schools. One does not hear them complain about massive budget cuts to education or its negative consequences for children in poverty and our education system. The very things that these children need most are now out of reach, and the corporate reformers are silent about that.”

essential. Each depends on the other.”

The issue of poverty in relation to student achievement was discussed in the past, says Ravitch, but ended when corporate leaders espoused the philosophy that schools should be run like a business.

“The present climate of school ‘reform’ narrative is led by millionaires and billionaires who believe that schools can eliminate

poverty — and they don’t want to talk about growing income inequality. They prefer to steer the national conversation to teacher evaluation and charter schools. One does not hear them complain about massive budget cuts to education or its negative consequences for children in poverty and our education system. The very things that these children need most are now out of reach, and the corporate reformers are silent about that.”

CTA has launched a tax fairness campaign and endorsed the “Occupy Wall Street” movement to address inequities, such as the fact that 1 percent of Americans hold a third of the nation’s wealth, and corporate income grew over 400 percent



GIVING DISADVANTAGED KIDS AN ‘EVEN START’

By age 3, children in more affluent families will have heard 30 million more words on average than children in low-income families.

Music and story time are more than just fun activities for the youngsters attending the Even Start Preschool in La Puente. They are also learning English, the ABCs, numbers, and social skills like sharing and sitting quietly in “circle time.”

The preschool, run by the district’s Family Resource Center, enrolls low-income students, ages 2-5, whose parents mostly work low-paying jobs in food service or construction. The goal is to help children become kindergarten-ready. It’s a challenge, because Even Start students speak little English, have few books at home, and in some cases have parents who did not go beyond elementary school.

“We focus on literacy, letter sound knowledge, improving oral language and English,” says preschool teacher Andrea Garcia, a member of the Association of Rowland Educators (ARE). “We also do math and science and lots of reading. In the room next door, their parents are learning English, parenting skills, and how they can help their children be successful in school. By the time they get to kindergarten, these students will hopefully be ahead of the game.”

However, due to budget cuts and dwindling grant money, there is a strong possibility that the preschool program may close next year. Garcia worries that if the program shuts down, youngsters in the community will begin kindergarten lagging behind their more affluent peers.

Studies show that the educational support children receive during their first five years influences the degree to which they are prepared for kindergarten and a lifetime of learning. That is especially true for the 694,000 youngsters age 5 and younger who live in poverty. By age 3, children in more affluent families will have heard 30 million more words on average than children in low-income families. The difference is likely to contribute to future school readiness, notes a report from www.childrennow.org.

“Eighty five percent of children’s core brain structure is developed by age 4, providing the foundation for their future health, academic success and social and emotional well-being,” notes the report. “Yet less than 4 percent of public investments in education

and development are targeted at children in this age group.”

According to the report, children in low-income families typically enter kindergarten 12 to 14 months behind the national average in pre-reading and language skills, and kindergartners who enter school lagging behind are likely to remain so as they move through school. Early gaps in school readiness evident in kindergarten are mirrored in third-grade standardized test scores.

Despite the importance of preschool as a way of leveling the playing field, California has severely cut educational programs for low-income youngsters below age 5, according to a recent report from the California Budget Project.

“California has repeatedly cut child care and development programs in recent years,” states the report. “A CBP analysis of state data shows that the cumulative impact of these reductions amounts to more than \$1.6 billion between 2009-10 and 2011-12.”

According to the report, lawmakers have reduced funding for preschool and most child care programs by 15 percent since 2009-10,

from 2001 to 2008, compared with 28 percent for individuals.

“The real question is: Whose responsibility is it to address the issue of poverty?” says CTA President Dean Vogel. “Some say that poor people should pull themselves up by their bootstraps. But if people don’t have boots, it becomes a community issue. Poverty and how it affects students and their families is an issue we can no longer afford to ignore.” 🎓



ABOVE: Preschool teacher Andrea Garcia pounds the drums with student Jocelyn Lara at Even Start Preschool in La Puente.

causing 35,000 low-income children to lose services. The Legislature also reduced the eligibility income limit for poor families, shifted costs to families by increasing day care and preschool fees by 10 percent, and eliminated child care for most 11- and 12-year-olds during traditional work hours.

“It’s a shame, because these children are like little sponges,” relates ARE member Jennifer Kottke, who oversees the program. “It will be devastating to have more students falling through the cracks because they are ill-prepared. When it comes to schooling, preparation is everything.”

MORE INFO

Visit the California Budget Project website at www.cbp.org for information on public policy that affects the economic and social well-being of low- and middle-income Californians.



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 does not have an Induction program.

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

The new UC San Diego Extension Clear Credential Program is:

- completely 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**.
- available to teachers employed outside of California.

To view credential requirements, program FAQ and 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 one year
- Interactive, Research-Based Programs with Practical Classroom Application

Programs include:

- CLAD Through CTETL
- 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) 534-9273 or mappel@ucsd.edu**

extension.ucsd.edu/education

5011-1042

A TEACHER'S *Evolution*



Story by **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**

► *Are good teachers born or made? It's a question worth pondering in an era when nearly half of all educators quit before their fifth year of teaching and the profession is under constant attack.*

English teacher *Brooke Nicolls* admittedly was not the best teacher starting out. Most teachers, if asked to chart the trajectory of their careers, would probably say the same about their initial experience as educators. As in any career path, a teacher's success depends greatly on the support, mentoring and professional development they receive along the way.

The path wasn't always easy for Nicolls. She barely survived student teaching and her first solo year. She got pink-slipped early on. She nearly quit from burnout, yet found a way to rekindle her passion.

Her achievements over 25 years of teaching are noteworthy. Nicolls earned a master's degree in 1995, received National Board Certification in 2003, and was honored by the Carlston Family Foundation in 2009 for outstanding teaching. She is one of a group of teachers at Grant High School in Sacramento who created a new curriculum designed to change culture in low-performing schools.

Still, Nicolls doesn't see herself as being particularly special.

"I'm always trying to find new ways to improve," she says modestly. "There are lots of teachers who are just like me."

The early years

Nicolls knows a thing or two about personal transformation. Nicolls was always "the new kid" because she attended seven schools as a child, finding her niche as a basketball player. She doesn't recall being encouraged to go to college. Her father suggested she join the military.

She assumed she couldn't afford college, but a high school coach urged her to apply to American River Junior College on the last day of registration. She transferred to CSU Sacramento, where she changed her major five times before earning a bachelor's degree in English and a minor in business administration. Three days before the deadline, she applied to the school's teacher credential program and was accepted.

"I was incredibly lucky, even though I was uninformed about college," she says. "I always tell kids to ask questions, find information and make informed decisions. I tell them they have options."

Student teaching at diverse Luther Burbank High School in Sacramento was "eye-opening," she relates. "I was naive thinking that I was going to walk into a classroom with students sitting there eagerly waiting to learn and their books open — and it's not like that. I went into the classroom and started teaching, and boy, I wasn't very good."

With little direction from the master teacher, Nicolls did the best she could. A fight broke out in her classroom. A stu-



dent made a pass at her. Classroom management was a constant challenge. She taught the way she had been taught — opening a book and reading vocabulary aloud.

“Gosh yes, I was boring!” she says. “Without a sense of humor, I couldn’t have gotten through it. I didn’t know what I was doing.”

She earned her teaching credential but wasn’t sure she would ever set foot in a classroom again. She took a job at UPS. While substitute teaching for extra income, she received a job offer to teach and coach basketball from Rio Linda High School in Sacramento County and accepted. She was assigned a class filled with “behavior problems” that had gone through eight substitute teachers. She operated in “survival mode” and continued the same style of teaching, trying to bond with students.

The turning point

During her second year, she began attending an after-school workshop series run by the Area 3 Writing Project at UC Davis. It transformed her style of teaching.

“I remember thinking, ‘Ohhh, now I get it — this is teaching!’” she recalls. “Suddenly I was part of a group of people who were talking about how to make connections with kids and how to teach writing, and what I was hearing rang true for me. It was serendipity. I never looked back.”

She focused on making material relevant to her students. “For example, when

I introduce them to the book 1984, I no longer start by asking them what they know about George Orwell. I learned that you have to start from where the kids are and help them to find themselves in the material so they have a voice. I ask them about privacy, whether their parents have the right to look at text messages, and whether the government has the right to go through their car without permission. I ask them how it feels to be racially profiled. I ask them to discuss things they care about and then move forward.”

Once engaged, students improved their behavior. She found that with higher expectations, students began acting like grown-ups.

“I learned how to scaffold curriculum, so I wasn’t just getting kids interested in a topic and saying, ‘Here, write about this,’” says Nicolls. “I learned how to move them along to increasingly complex tasks so they could build on their skills and apply them in a variety of ways.”

Her pacing changed, too.

“The best thing I learned from the Writing Project is to look at where my students are and let that influence what I am going to teach next. By looking at where they are, I can constantly adjust.”

She told students there was no excuse for failure, and did something unusual: She put her phone number on the board and told them to call her if they needed help with homework. “I said, ‘If you are not willing to take advantage of this resource, shame

on you. And if you are sitting around on a Saturday night and prank-call me, apparently you need dating advice.’ I only got two or three prank calls in my entire career, because my kids understood that I wanted them to succeed and do well.”

Her confidence grew as a teacher, and her students were showing growth. But she received a pink slip her third year due to budget cuts.

“I knew it was coming; I was the person with least seniority,” she recalls. “I felt that I was a good teacher, but that I was disposable. It was very painful.”

Emerging stronger

She lost her job, but didn’t lose her spirit. Fellow Writing Project members who had also received pink slips formed a support group, and several of them became involved in a summer program called Transition to College for the Area 3 Writing Project, where they created curriculum and thematic units of instruction.

“I wanted to focus on moving kids beyond valuing material things so they could examine their own sense of what’s right and wrong and learn how to make decisions for themselves,” says Nicolls. “The thematic unit revolved around short stories, nonfiction and a novel about what to do in certain situations, how to problem-solve, and what kinds of things should really be valued. It was geared toward students traditionally not college bound.”

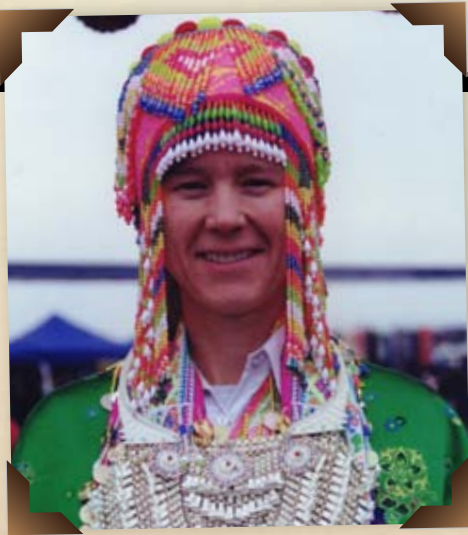


Photo by Scott Buschman

Her “team of five” was invited to come teach at Grant High School in 1990, where nearly all of the students are at the poverty level. The newcomers were asked to implement their new curriculum, and gradually the school environment become more collaborative and professional learning communities were formed.

“Within the English Department, our goal was to bring in rigorous curriculum and make it accessible,” she relates. “Teachers became more cohesive and shared common expectations. Students knew what to expect from one grade to the next and had continuity. We also wanted to build community so students could participate in discussions and critique each other’s work in an environment where they felt safe. We wanted to set guidelines and consistently model the behavior we expected from students. We wanted our classrooms to be a microcosm of larger society, and instead of just assigning work, we wanted kids to take ownership of what they were doing and set goals for themselves.”

The school has risen steadily in achievement, and Nicolls calls Grant High School “the best-kept secret” in Sacramento. She was offered a job at a more affluent school, but turned it down so she could stay where she felt most needed.

Nicolls sought to continue her education, and was accepted into the master’s program in international multicultural education at the University of San Francisco in 1994.

“It was very strenuous,” she says. “I came out of the program a better teacher — and

also a better person. In the program, we examined our teaching, philosophies about life, cultural differences and personal bias. We looked at what it meant to be part of a global community, and it gave me a world view instead of relying on my own view of the world.”

In 2003 she received National Board Certification at the urging of her district, which paid for the application process. Certification further improved her practice.

“The most beneficial thing about the National Board Certification Process was taking time to reflect on the choices I made about why I chose certain assignments, what I looked for in student work and how it informs the next steps I want to take. It was like putting a microscope on choices I make and reflecting on those choices. What should I do next time? What really works?”

Overcoming burnout

Nicolls, a teacher for 25 years, almost quit during her 10th year.

“I felt burned out and tired of the paper grading, the time commitment, the seemingly endless needs of my students, and changing administration,” she says. She considered attending fewer workshops so she would have more time to catch up on paperwork and lesson planning.

Then she was invited by the director of the Area 3 Writing Project to become a more active participant in professional development opportunities. She felt torn.

“At first I resisted, thinking that I just

couldn’t do one more thing,” she recalls. “But then I said yes, and to my surprise, as I became busier, I felt differently. I felt energized because I was doing more than just being a teacher. I was given the opportunity to see myself as a learner. I wasn’t just ‘feeding’ others. I was being fed as an intellectual, as a reflective thinker. I was given time to share ideas and talk through what worked and what didn’t. I now had a larger and more constant professional community — one that challenged me and helped me to be a better teacher.”

Nicolls is aware of the attack on public education, the magazine headlines that cry “Fire the bad teachers,” and the fact that teachers are undervalued and underpaid.

“What’s being lost in this discussion is the importance of professional knowledge,” she relates. “Some people feel that teaching doesn’t require anything. They say, ‘I went to school and I can teach.’ They discount the knowledge and experience that teachers bring to the classroom. But this knowledge and experience helps them be good teachers.”

Experienced teachers, says Nicolls, need the opportunity to grow, reflect and see themselves as learners alongside their students. “I’m always thinking of things I can do better. That’s what has kept me in the profession so long.” 🎓

BROOKE NICOLLS
IN ACTION

► *We stopped in recently this year to see our veteran CTA teacher at work in the classroom, and to see the teacher she has become over 25 years of service.*

MAY 19, 2011

Gang violence, drugs and incarcerated family members have impacted some of the students in Nicolls' writing class, and they have developed a tough exterior to survive. But now, on the verge of graduation, the teens display a childlike vulnerability as they walk to the front of the class for an oral presentation on overcoming personal obstacles. Some fight back tears as they describe how proud they are to graduate when friends have been imprisoned, killed or become accidental parents.

Nicolls nods encouragingly and leads the class in applause and constructive comments after each presentation, which is a significant part of each student's overall grade. Students hug each other with relief when finished. It's clear that most of them consider this place more than a mere classroom; it is a learning community and a safe haven.

"I'm hearing a similar message from each one of you," says Nicolls. "I'm hearing don't give up, don't give up, don't give up."

Her students reveal later that one of the reasons that they haven't given up is Nicolls – and the fact that she won't give up on them.

"She's great," says Claudia Torres. "During a time when I had problems, she called me. She kept pushing me. She told me that I had made it this far and that I could graduate. She helped me to figure out college and how to write essays to get into college. She has gone above and beyond, and I'm lucky to have her for a teacher."

Before the bell rings, Nicolls has some last words. "You all have courage. But having courage doesn't mean you are fearless. Courage helps you face your fear and move forward."

AUGUST 30, 2011

Nicolls surveys the new crop of 12th-graders and begins anew.

"What makes a teacher effective? What makes a teacher ineffective?" she asks.

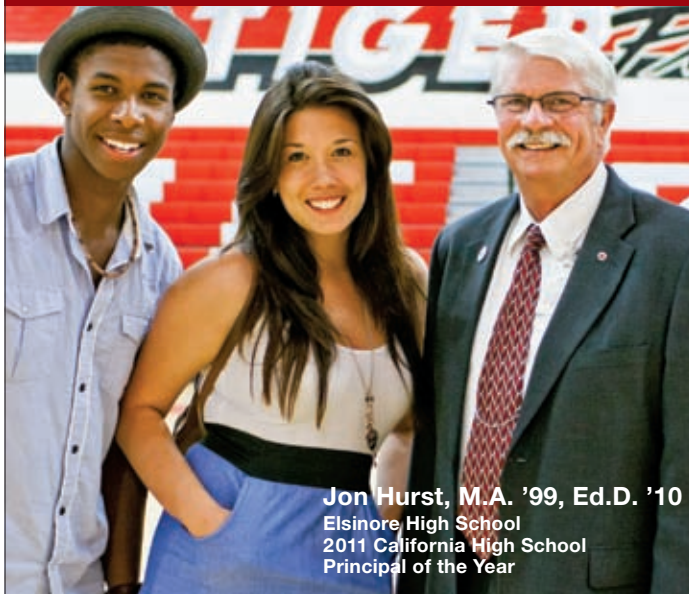
The students are surprised to be asked questions about teacher quality, but the white board is soon filled with adjectives about what students want and don't want from the soft-spoken woman standing in front of them.

They want to be treated with dignity. They want Nicolls to be organized, prepared, interesting and enthusiastic. They want her to make learning fun and care about them.

Nicolls explains these are also what she wants from them, and these traits will help them succeed in college, career and relationships throughout their lives. The discussion segues into what constitutes a "habit" that is practiced, versus a "quality" like being interesting or boring. Then students break into discussion groups to examine the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey, which she hopes will influence the way they approach school work and future achievement.

"These kids are great, but people outside of our community don't realize that, and sometimes these kids don't know their own potential," says Nicolls. "Some teachers say they don't have time for character development, but if you don't work with them and they have problems later on, they will blame their employer. Let's try and figure out how they can change themselves, improve their behavior and learn all at the same time."

Azusa Pacific University
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION



Jon Hurst, M.A. '99, Ed.D. '10
Elsinore High School
2011 California High School
Principal of the Year

**Earn your degree from a university
known for excellence in education.**

Azusa Pacific has a reputation for consistently producing innovative and comprehensively prepared educators. Our graduates serve as teachers, counselors, coaches, and administrators throughout Southern California, and are known in their schools and districts as leaders in their field.

Choose from more than 40 credential and degree options at APU, including a bachelor's degree completion program in liberal studies, and join a 112-year legacy of excellence in education.

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

www.apu.edu/explore/education
(800) 825-5278



12629

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



TEACHERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF THEIR STUDENTS EVERY DAY, BUT SOMETIMES, IT TAKES A THOUGHTFUL NOTE FROM A FORMER STUDENT TO REMIND THEM.

It was one of these notes that got CTA staffer Mary McNulty thinking. Her husband, Granite Bay High School Assistant Principal Brian McNulty, had shared a letter that history teacher Brandon Dell’Orto had received in the wake of a school tragedy last spring. The note moved McNulty to suggest we do something to showcase these letters of thanks. “I don’t believe that we can ever take too many opportunities to let those who have impacted us greatly, especially our teachers, know just how much we appreciate them,” Mary wrote in an e-mail to the Communications Department. We agree.

MANY OF US have written to our own favorite teachers or counselors or bus drivers to let them know how much they meant to us. These notes may end up tucked away in desk drawers, pasted in scrapbooks, or tacked onto a bulletin board to be read on a particularly bad day and then tucked away again. Still, they serve as tangible proof of the positive impact one person can have.

These notes are worth sharing — especially at a time when shameful attacks on teachers have reached epidemic proportions. That’s why we are launching the “Thank You, Teacher!” Project to remind the public — and each other — of all that educators do. Over the past several weeks, we’ve asked you to send in those cards and letters that keep you going. And send them in you did. You sent in “love” notes from first-graders, thank you notes from college-bound high schoolers, updates from post-grads, and letters of appreciation from grown adults who have achieved success and happiness.

Beginning in this issue and over the next few months, the *California Educator* and the cta.org website will feature those heartfelt notes to teachers, counselors, librarians, community college faculty and education support professionals who educate and support California’s students.

MARGARET FUJISAWA, an education support professional who is a member of the Association of Classified Employees – Culver City, has received her share of thank-you notes in her work as a guidance technician at the Culver City High School College Career Center, including this one from a college-bound student:

“Thank you so much for all your help thus far in my high school career. Already you have assisted me in ways that I haven’t even imagined, opened doors that I did not know were there. I would like to take this time to show my gratitude for recommending me to receive the scholarship for Santa Monica College and working tenaciously so that I could receive priority consideration for the Culver City Community Scholarship. There were many things that you did not have to do for me, but you went out of your way to fight for me and still continue doing so today. ... You’ve already done more than I could ask for.”

It was just a short note. Four words. But it meant a lot to **MARDIECE PATRICK**, a third-grade teacher at Truckee Elementary School and a member of the Tahoe-Truckee Education Association, who sent us an e-mail that read:

“A student gave me a note the last day of school which really simply, ‘You changed my life.’ I will never forget it, because that’s why I do what I do!”

JONI MICALS, a special education teacher and member of the Hart District Teachers Association, has developed a cache of thank-you notes since 1975, the year she started teaching. One of her former students wrote:

“In the two years of you being my teacher, you helped me to control my temper better and brought my grades [up]. ... Before I met you, I was any teacher’s worst nightmare, but somehow you calmed me down. Before I met you, my history grades were terrible, but you make it fun to where I wanted to learn.”

At a time when school librarians are being laid off, it is important to remember their roles in a student's life, as **KAREN BOYARSKY**, a librarian at Beverly Hills High School and member of the Beverly Hills Education Association discovered. She received a letter from Sandy Anahi Chamorro, a non-English-speaking immigrant student whose world was rocked when she began spending time in the school library.

“ While wandering around and checking out the books, many caught my attention, such as languages. It's beautiful to understand where the words we speak every day come from. And it amazes me that now, learning my fifth language, Russian, I am powerful enough to start a business around the world. Thanks to a little red Latin book in the language section, I know how to encode what people are saying. ... I would like to thank Mrs. Boyarsky, Dr. Ramsey and Ms. Sedgi for being the first ones to teach me English, Joe Wianeki for always keeping it real, and Barbara Palmer for being so strict. You definitely put me on the right path to success, and I will keep going that way. One day I will come back to Beverly Hills and Beverly Hills High School's library is the first destination.”

LENN SCHWARTZ, a teacher-librarian member of the Firebaugh-Las Deltas Unified Teachers Association, was surprised this summer to hear from Andrew Valencia, one of the students in his middle school language arts class nine years ago. Valencia, who has been teaching English abroad before applying to graduate schools in creative writing, e-mailed his former teacher in July:

“ I'm writing to let you know that, nearly a full decade later, I still remember you as one of the first teachers I ever had who really opened my eyes to the world of writing and literature. I still remember you reading to the class from Steinbeck's Cannery Row and encouraging me to read Saroyan and other writers. That was the first real exposure I had to great literature, and it helped me develop a love for the written word as well as a desire to write fiction myself. These many years later, I have come a long way from the kid I was in the eighth grade; I graduated last year from Stanford with a bachelor's degree in English and a minor in history.”

Hearing the news of the tragic death of a student at Granite Bay High School prompted a former student of history teacher **BRANDON DELL'ORTO** to write him a note this spring. Now at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., Christy Johnson was attending a student conference with President Obama when her mind drifted back to her high school teachers. In an e-mail to Dell'Orto, she wrote:

“ The person who I am, the person who I've become, my goals, my ideas, my ethics, the reason that I am at Georgetown, and ultimately, the reason that I momentarily was sitting 10 feet from one of the most influential men in all of history all stem from my time within the Granite Bay community.”

In classes like yours we are all challenged to open our minds, we are encouraged to find enjoyment through learning, and we are all inspired to be the change the world needs to see.

So today, when I sat with 300 other students and was told by our president that we would need to accomplish all of the things that he cannot, I immediately thought of all of my high school teachers because you all are the ones who are really changing the world.”

Noticeably touched, Dell'Orto, a member of the Roseville Secondary Education Association, commented in an e-mail to staff, “In the midst of tragedy, testing upon testing, taxes, tax battles and the like, it's nice to know that sometimes what we do does get through.”

Sometimes it takes a few years for students to look back in appreciation for their teachers. It wasn't until a Fairfield police officer heard his former elementary teacher, CTA President **DEAN VOGEL**, on the radio that he decided to drop him a line.

“ You may or may not remember me, but I did want you to know that your guidance and leadership had a lasting effect. I still have good memories of the class singing while you playing the guitar or you reading from a book called *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. I know I was a handful to deal with throughout elementary (and you stayed on top of my actions). I wanted to send you a VERY late but well-deserved THANK YOU for your commitment to leadership, education, and for not giving up on me.”

SO KEEP THOSE LETTERS COMING IN.

Send your thank-you notes to the “Thank You, Teacher!” Project, CTA Communications Department, 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010, or to dmartin@cta.org. And maybe you want to drop a line to a teacher who made a difference in *your* life.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

GLBT Conference perspectives

Educators from throughout California come together to increase their awareness of GLBT issues

NINE OUT OF 10 GLBT students have experienced harassment at school at a rate two to three times as often as straight teens. More than one-third of GLBT kids have attempted suicide. Designed to provide

from throughout California under the theme "Pride in Education."

CTA President Dean E. Vogel gave the conference's keynote address, and Vietnam veteran and Bronze Star recipient Col.

uncomfortable, it is where I need to be.' It is only by challenging others with our humanity that we will become human in their eyes. I will continue to speak out, and I hope you do too," said Cammermeyer.

State Sen. Mark Leno (D-San Francisco), author of the newly signed SB 48, the Fair Education Act, concluded the conference with a Sunday morning address.

The CTA GLBT Issues Advisory Committee, co-chaired by Los Angeles educator Sue Cirillo and Santa Ana educator C. Scott Miller, coordinated the conference.

By Bill Guy



I have learned that "If I am uncomfortable, it is where I need to be." It is only by challenging others with our humanity that we will become human in their eyes.

Col. Grethe Cammermeyer

information and resources to prevent this kind of discrimination, CTA's third annual Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Conference took place Oct. 28-30 in Palm Springs, drawing almost 300 participants

Grethe Cammermeyer, who successfully challenged the military's "Don't ask, don't tell" policy, gaining reinstatement in the National Guard, spoke to participants at Saturday's lunch. "I have learned that 'If I am

Same Car for Thousands Less!

The NEA Auto Buying Program offers guaranteed low pricing without having to haggle.

MSRP:
\$22,830

NEA Member Price
\$19,593*



2011 Ford Fusion 4dr Sedan S FWD

Money Saving Benefits Include:

- Low prices upfront and in writing
- Average savings of \$4,302** off MSR
- Friendly, no-hassle customer service
- High-quality used vehicles priced to save you money



Start saving today! Visit www.neamb.com/autoKEA

*NEA Member Prices vary by area. Price shown is an average based on actual customer transaction. Price is based on national Certified Dealer average price on a 2011 Ford Fusion 4dr Sedan S FWD, including manufacturer incentives as of 3/18/11.

**Prices vary by area. Average new car savings is based on actual customer transactions, including manufacturer incentives as of 12/31/10

ZAG
A TRUECar COMPANY



AB051111

► We caught up with a few of the participants at the GLBT Conference, and here's what they had to say.



Lisa Bartoli > 4th Grade, Santa Monica-Malibu Classroom Teachers Association

I know that some of my elementary students may be experiencing a sense of being different without attaching such feelings to a specific identity. One reason for participating in the GLBT Conference was to learn how better to help such students and those around them become more tolerant of differences. Sen. Mark Leno's remarks about commitment to finding "common ground" inspired me to further dedicate myself to this practice. As a passionate believer in respectful treatment for all, I have served as a team member for the bullying prevention program implemented by my district. My colleagues are already extremely sensitive to GLBT issues, and I have already started inviting my straight allies to join me at next year's event.



Robert V. Rodriguez > Grades 4-8 Special Education, San Bernardino Teachers Association

My most significant "take away" was the Laramie Project, a powerful presentation on teaching GLBT issues within the content area aligned to state standards. The strategies were engaging, thought-provoking and empowering. California legislation now mandates incorporating safety in school and the positive contributions of GLBT historical figures into the curriculum, so this conference was especially timely. I also benefited from workshops on Bullying Prevention, Creating Safe Zones for Students and Staff, Legal Rights for GLBT Members, and Unconscious Bias. I'd like to bring back some of the things I learned at the conference to help create a more positive culture at my school toward GLBT issues, including bullying prevention.



Samantha Pullen > President, Student CTA

Since the GLBT community is under attack on all fronts, it is essential for organizations like CTA to do everything possible to educate and support the rights of all members and students. My participation has helped me realize that although I think I am sensitive and supportive of GLBT issues, it goes to a much deeper level. After engaging in productive discussions on a large range of GLBT issues, I will leave the conference sobered by the degree to which many GLBT educators and students wrestle every day with the fear that their sexuality could make them targets of discrimination or even violence. Educators and students should not have to hide part of who they are. The bottom line is equitable rights for all.



Daniel Perez > High School English, Fremont Education Association

Traditionally, GLBT issues in education have been swept under the rug, but with more students and educators coming out, there's a growing need to help them become aware of their rights, protections and history. As the Gay-Straight Alliance adviser at my high school, I found many valuable resources at this conference. Mobilizing my students and colleagues to participate in Gay-Straight Alliance events continues to be a challenge, and support is often more talked about than acted upon. I'm hoping to increase the visibility of GLBT issues, highlighting that respect and safety affect us all. I think once people understand that GLBT issues are bigger than they might think, maybe they'll be more active in their support.



Lori Regalado > Preschool Teacher, Redlands Education Support Professionals Association

It is extremely important for all who work in a school to become educated about GLBT issues so that there can be more support for colleagues and students. Before attending this conference, I did not have a good understanding of the obstacles faced by GLBT students and colleagues on a daily basis, but I have learned so much valuable information. It is important that all conference participants could be themselves without hesitation or anxiety. With a graduate degree in school counseling and a PPS Credential, I'm hoping to go into that field, and I know that my experience at this conference has given me many resources toward that goal. I can't wait for next year's GLBT Conference!



Bill Fisher > President, Corona-Norco Teachers Association

Our local chapter does not currently have an active GLBT Committee to advocate for our members or students who belong to the GLBT community. I participated in this conference to get knowledge and ideas about how to actively seek out members willing to help build an infrastructure in CNTA to support those who may not feel supported or safe in traditional groups in CNTA or at school sites. As a leader, I need to show by example the responsibility all educators have to be good allies for all our GLBT members and students. Knowledge is the key. No one who becomes informed about the issues facing our GLBT population can comfortably sit on the sidelines. All in the education profession have a responsibility to understand these compelling issues.

► FOR UPDATED INFORMATION ON THE CFA STRIKE, VISIT WWW.CALFAC.ORG.

CFA MOVES TOWARD A STRIKE

FOLLOWING AN OVERWHELMING vote by faculty, leadership of the California Faculty Association (CFA) took a historic step to hold a one-day strike Nov. 17 on two campuses — CSU East Bay and CSU Dominguez Hills — in order to send a strong message to Chancellor Charles Reed regarding his priorities.

Faculty members are angered by the chancellor's rejection of a second neutral fact-finder's recommendations that faculty be paid part of the salary increases negotiated in their 2008-09 and 2009-10 contract. CFA believes Reed's action, his relentless push for hikes in student fees, and his lavish giveaways to executives hurt students,

Our workload has been increasing, but what this means for students is their classes are getting bigger or aren't even offered, and they have less access to faculty, so they are not getting instruction they deserve. All the while, their fees are going up.

Jennifer Egan

faculty, and the CSU itself, and should not go unchallenged.

"Our faculty has had enough. They are angry, frustrated and fed up," says Jennifer Egan, a professor at CSU East Bay. "Our workload has been increasing, but what this means for students is their classes are getting bigger or aren't even offered, and



NEA Director Gilda Bloom and her colleague Lucia Volk carry a banner at the noontime picket line at San Francisco State University.

they have less access to faculty, so they are not getting instruction they deserve. All the while, their fees are going up."

Leading up to the strike was a week of picket lines on individual CSU campuses statewide by faculty and their supporters, including CTA.

"The California Teachers Association stands solidly behind California Faculty Association's action to participate in a one-day strike on Nov. 17, as well as its concerted actions leading up to the strike," says CTA President Dean E. Vogel.

"It is not right that tuition at CSU campuses has risen 23 percent in the past year while students are unable to get into classes and are forced to take five or more years to graduate. It is not right for the faculty to go without its modest, bargained pay increases while the number of CSU executives and their pay continue to increase. In taking this action to strike for a day, the faculty within

the California State University system is standing up for their students and standing up for their profession."

CFA Vice President Kim Geron, a political science professor at CSU East Bay, says faculty are willing to accept a modest but fair salary increase. "We feel like our faculty has fallen far behind. Faculty salaries have not kept up with inflation for a decade. What we want is equity and fairness for all faculty."

Although the *Educator* had gone to press before the Nov. 17 strike, that action may only be the beginning of a longer battle.

According to CFA President Lillian Taiz, "We hope this carefully targeted strike, which symbolizes both our anger and our commitment to fairness, will lead to changes in his priorities and his positions. If it does not, the CFA leadership — and the CSU faculty we represent — are prepared to escalate our efforts."

By Dina Martin

CTA pushes for Jobs Act passage

ON OCT. 21, education, community, and labor leaders gathered at a news conference in Los Angeles to urge Congress to pass President Obama's Jobs Act and to help put millions of Americans back to work. Just the previous day, the Senate had blocked the "first responders" portion of the legislation, which would have authorized \$35 billion to keep educators and public safety workers on the job.

The president first proposed the jobs package in early September, unveiling an initiative based on bipartisan ideas that would provide tax relief to small businesses and workers and billions of dollars in infrastructure and education investment. When the entire package was blocked by the Senate in early October, the president vowed to press ahead by breaking the bill into individual pieces of legislation. First up on Congress's plate was the teacher jobs component.

"Americans deserve an explanation from lawmakers who oppose putting teachers, police, and firefighters back to work," said CTA Secretary-Treasurer Mikki Cichocki. "Congress needs to step up to the plate. Educators are fed up seeing our students go without, while banks are being bailed out, and the poor and middle class are being shut out. That's why movements like Occupy Wall Street are building momentum and why they have our support."

Cichocki was joined at the news conference by other supporters of the Jobs Act, including United Teachers Los Angeles President Warren Fletcher, California Federation of Teachers President Joshua Pechthalt, Los Angeles County Federation of Labor Executive Secretary-Treasurer Maria Elena Durazo, and California Courage Campaign founder Rick Jacobs, as well as two Californians who are struggling with long-term unemployment. Earlier in the week, Jacobs had delivered 27,000 signatures to House Speaker John Boehner urging passage of the Jobs Act.

Student CTA President Samantha Pullen pointed out the benefits the Jobs Act would have for higher education students and pressed for a fairer tax system. "SCTA believes our education system is undervalued," she said. "We need to close [tax] loopholes and increase the size of the entire pie, not just our portion. The divide between the haves and have-nots is growing."

Although the teacher/first responder component has been blocked for now, other sections of the Jobs Act could still benefit schools. A \$25 billion school modernization program would help at least 35,000 schools nationwide and create up to 36,600 California jobs, and a \$5 billion community college package would help modernize the state's college campuses.

Additionally, as Congress's "supercommittee" nears its Nov. 23 deadline to cut \$1.3 trillion to \$1.5 trillion from the budget, it's critical that lawmakers hear that creating and protecting jobs should be a higher priority than harmful across-the-board cuts that would hurt schools and other programs.

By Frank Wells

Contact your representatives in Congress today and tell them to protect working families, seniors, and the disadvantaged, and to help put America back to work.



CTA Secretary-Treasurer Mikki Cichocki urges Congress to support President Obama's Jobs Act at a Los Angeles news conference.

ONLINE MASTER'S IN EDUCATION

Are you a credentialed teacher without a master's degree?

Touro University's California Graduate School of Education offers an online 18-unit Master of Arts in Education degree exclusively for California teachers. Next cohort begins January 2012.

- MA Degree in Education with an emphasis in Innovative Learning
- Collaborate and explore in an active online educational community
- An innovative curriculum which creates the future of learning and education
- Experiment with new learning tools in the context of teaching
- Credit for credential coursework allows degree to be completed in one year



TOURO UNIVERSITY
CALIFORNIA

1310 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA 94592 | (707) 638-5200 | tu.edu

Educators help craft California's 'Blueprint for Great Schools'

A GOOD BLUEPRINT builds a good foundation and a powerful structure.

How to build and improve California's public schools is the focus of a revealing new report titled "A Blueprint for Great Schools" from a high-powered panel of educators, parents, and community, business and labor leaders offering their best advice.

This blueprint amounts to a vision for the California Department of Education to follow for many years. Vital subjects covered include educator quality, finance reform and efficiency, facility/construction reform, accountability, and redesigning secondary school program models to better prepare students for college.

After his election a year ago, state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson pulled together the 59-member transition advisory team in January.

The team's findings are sobering, a reflection of how year after year of diminished resources, difficult circumstances, and shifting policy choices have frayed the very fabric of our most treasured public institutions — our neighborhood schools.

It met several times and released the report in August. Torlakson posted the 31-page document online at www.cde.ca.gov/eo/in/bp and invited the public to send feedback to blueprint@cde.ca.gov.

"In some respects, the team's findings are sobering, a reflection of how year after year of diminished resources, difficult circumstances, and shifting policy choices have frayed the very fabric of our most treasured public institutions — our neighborhood schools," Torlakson says in his cover letter. "There is also cause for great hope and optimism. On issue after issue, you will find a wealth of sound strategies that hold great

promise for our students and our schools."

CTA President Dean E. Vogel commends Torlakson for listening to teachers on the panel and praises the report's focus on finding better ways to retain and recruit educators, as well as more stable revenue sources and better support for students and teachers.

"When our neighborhood schools are at risk, our communities are at risk," Vogel says. "This report is really a blueprint for a better future for California. Despite the unprecedented cuts to our schools and the uncertain economy, we must find a way to fund some of these more urgent recommendations."

No price tag came with the report's suggestions.

But without changes, the state faces dangers. If nothing is done, the state faces a shortfall of a million college-educated workers by 2025. School district funding inequities continue, with low-income schools and students losing out on funding and experienced teachers, the report warns.

Teachers on the panel included former CTA President David A. Sanchez; Tim Sbranti, mayor of Dublin and teacher at Dublin High School; Abigail Garcia, a teacher at Animo Leadership Charter High School in Inglewood; Liane Cismowski, vice principal and teacher at Mt. Diablo High School, Concord; Gregg Solkovits, secondary vice president of United Teachers Los Angeles; and Jeff Patterson, a teacher at Antelope Valley High School in Lancaster, Los Angeles County.

Sbranti, who is chair of State Council's Political Involvement Committee, played a key role on the panel. He co-chaired a workgroup on education supports and parent/community involvement that recommended in the Blueprint that the California Department of Education create a "parent involvement master plan" to promote family engagement and collaboration with schools and educators.

"It was very refreshing that teachers played such a key role in framing this Blueprint," Sbranti says. "Teachers very much



Modesto Teachers Association President **Dana Filippi** and state Superintendent of Public Instruction **Tom Torlakson**.

had a seat at the table."

Solkovits worked on educator quality issues. He notes the report's disturbing conclusion that teacher turnover caused by "poor, but correctable, teaching conditions" costs California an estimated \$700 million a year in replacement costs for educators who leave before retirement, based on estimates from the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future.

"We have to find ways to pay our teachers more so we can attract and retain the best and the brightest educators," Solkovits says. "It's a side of the story that never gets told enough. Our veteran teachers are leaving, too. We need to provide the support they all need."

He says it was thrilling to exchange reform ideas on the panel with renowned education expert Linda Darling-Hammond, a professor of education at Stanford. She co-chaired the team with David Rattray, senior vice president of education and workforce development for the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.

The report "lays out the challenge before us," Darling-Hammond writes in the state's news release unveiling the blueprint.

She adds that the state must rejoin "the ranks of high-achieving states by investing in quality teaching and creating a system that meets the demands of 21st century learning with forward-looking standards, curriculum, and assessments that ensure students are college and career ready."

By Mike Myslinski

Blueprint ideas include:

Among its many ideas, the report says California should:

- ▶ Invest more in schools to halt costly teacher turnover.
- ▶ Find new and stable sources of revenue for education.
- ▶ Enhance student access to health care, social services and other resources that affect a good education.
- ▶ Strengthen teacher mentoring programs like BTSA and Peer Assistance and Review.
- ▶ Launch an ongoing union-management collaboration initiative to enact reforms.
- ▶ Incorporate more technology and revise curriculum standards for our classrooms to "better reflect the demands of a knowledge-based society and economy."

Q&A

Visit www.cta.org/TorlaksonQA to read our interview with Superintendent Tom Torlakson.

Pursue Your Passion Earn a Graduate Degree in Education or Public Health

Touro University's master's degree and credential programs are looking for motivated students with a desire to serve, to teach and to lead. Now is the time to contact us.

Graduate School of Education programs:

23 MA degree and credential programs in education, including teaching, special education and administration.

Public Health Program:

Earn a Master of Public Health (MPH) with specializations in Community Health and Global Health.



TOURO UNIVERSITY
CALIFORNIA

1310 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA 94592 | (707) 638-5200 | tu.edu

American Public University

You are **1** degree away from changing your world. **Which 1 will it be?**



You are one degree away from achieving more. American Public University has 87 online degrees. Our tuition is far less than other top online universities so you can further your education without breaking the bank. You are one click away from making it happen.

Graduate level courses start monthly at only \$325 per semester hour.

Learn more about one of the best values in online education at studyatAPU.com/cal-ed

APU was recognized in 2009 and 2010 for best practices in online education by the prestigious Sloan Consortium.



Text "APU" to 44144 for more info.
Message and data rates may apply.

ACTION

STATE COUNCIL	34
REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES	35
RAVITCH VISITS CALIFORNIA	36
GOVERNOR'S PENSION PLAN	38

► LOOK FOR THE NEW STATE COUNCIL SECTION ONLINE AT WWW.CTA.ORG/STATECOUNCIL.

CTA WILL LEAD THE WAY IN INITIATIVE BATTLES AHEAD

IN HIS FIRST SPEECH to State Council as CTA president, Dean E. Vogel vowed that CTA will be integral to the process of defeating a deceptive paycheck initiative about to qualify for the November 2012 ballot, and in passing a school funding measure that's still in the works. CTA is part of a broad coalition seeking a public funding initiative that supports education and all essential public services.

Council members voted to oppose the paycheck scam, called the "Stop Special Interest Money Now Act." By banning all California unions from using payroll-deducted funds for political purposes, the initiative would unfairly silence the political voices of the middle class, while letting wealthy corporate interests spend as much

as they want. They are picking this fight here because "California is one of the last union strongholds," Vogel warned. Noting that U.S. corporations already outspend unions by about 15 to 1, Vogel vowed that CTA will work with a strong labor alliance to defeat the paycheck deception scam next year for a third time since 1998. Council also approved spending up to \$8 million next year to oppose or support ballot measures.

Vogel reminded delegates that whatever school funding initiative is settled on in the next few months, Council policies say it must be based on the union's principles of tax fairness and it must be based on progressive taxation. Also, it should generate at least \$8 billion to help heal years of unprecedented cuts. In order to be successful, CTA will be working in a broad coalition.

BASIC UNION RIGHTS

CTA Executive Director Carolyn Doggett noted that coordinated attacks on collective bargaining and basic union rights are mounting across the country, and the battle is on "for the very heart and soul of the America we believe in. It's a battle for an organized democracy that values economic opportunity, equality and social justice for every American. And it's a battle for the belief in every child — not just a select few."

This year alone, 11 states passed anti-collective-bargaining and dues reduction bills, and educators and public employees



Whatever school funding initiative is settled on in the next few months, Council policies say it must be based on the union's principles of tax fairness and it must be based on progressive taxation.

Dean Vogel

in six states lost full bargaining rights. There are threats to collective bargaining rights in 20 other states. Invoking labor expert Dr. Elaine Bernard, who directs the Harvard Trade Union Program, Doggett said building community coalitions and showing union solidarity are critical as we move ahead. "Our future really is up to all of us, and the best way to predict the future is to create it!"

PUBLIC EDUCATION CENTRAL TO REBUILDING OUR COUNTRY

On another front, CTA's recent support of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement has everything to do with public education, said Vogel. "Public education is central to rebuilding our country and to shrinking the growing chasm between the haves and the have-nots."

In other action, State Council:

- Elected Kendall Vaught to the CTA Board of Directors for District M, and Laura Finco to the CTA/ABC Committee for District C.
- Affirmed its support for allowing the Legislature to approve the state budget and revenue increases based on majority rule, rather than a two-thirds vote. Council approved a motion to have the Political Involvement Committee evaluate any legislation or legitimate ballot measures regarding simple-majority vote efforts and to allow local chapters and members to support and encourage legitimate efforts toward this goal.

Regions I and II leadership conferences a hit



Photo by Mike Myslinski

CTA President **Dean Vogel** speaks at an "Occupy LAUSD" rally, in which hundreds of UTLA members and State Council delegates take part.

In an emotional show of solidarity, scores of Council delegates — educators from across California — joined CTA President Dean E. Vogel in a march on Oct. 22 from the Bonaventure Hotel in downtown Los Angeles to join United Teachers Los Angeles President Warren Fletcher and UTLA members at their "Occupy LAUSD" protest at the headquarters of the nation's second-largest school district. The ongoing UTLA protest is focused on keeping public schools public, lessening the influence of billionaires like Bill Gates and Eli Broad in the district, and demanding that the richest 1 percent pay their fair share of taxes while teachers are being laid off and students are stuffed into overcrowded classrooms.

By **Mike Myslinski**

CTA LEADERS FROM Regions I and II met in Pacific Grove and Reno, Nev., to discuss the issues their members currently face. Members attended helpful workshops and discussions, and listened to keynote speaker Elaine Bernard, head of the Harvard Trade Union Program, stress the importance of organizing in a time when unions are under attack nationwide.

REGION I: A "PERFECT STORM"

For Kathy Young and many other Northern California CTA members who attended the CTA Region I Leadership Conference in mid-October, the "perfect storm" theme was perfect. It gave an urgency to the Pacific Grove gathering of nearly 500 educators and the vital workshops and inspiring speakers selected to help members weather the storm of challenges facing public education.

"It was one of the most useful CTA conferences I have ever attended," says Young, the communications director for the Cupertino Education Association and a fourth-grade teacher. Her media relations and internal communications training prompted her to rev up her Santa Clara County chapter's social media program, and to start to revamp its website.

Keynote speaker Elaine Bernard inspired Young. "She is really dynamic. She puts everything in a new light."

"We are wearing targets on our backs," said Bernard, because public employees are the most unionized sector in America. "We can create a better future."

She praised those in the audience for taking the time to get involved in their union and seeing the power of collective action in the workplace. "We discovered that if we organized a few people and a bunch of us stood up, we could change things."

The "perfect storm" theme was reflected in the workshops offered: how to fight back against the "bad teacher" narrative; a look at who is behind attacks on unions; an examination of labor's rich history and what it means to be a union leader; and how to organize for power by building a CTA chapter based on strong relationships with colleagues and their values.

Participants spent a part of the Oct. 14-16 weekend discussing in small groups how education reform, online learning and the state's fiscal crisis challenge public education today. Educators left the conference

with a framework for understanding the perfect storm of problems our schools and union face; they learned how to empower members and chapters through collective actions; and they learned the connections between the workshops and the development of union survival skills, and the need to plan the next steps.

In his inspirational closing speech, CTA President Dean E. Vogel underscored the perfect storm concerns.

"Region I never turns away from the tough issues, and this weekend's conference was no exception," Vogel said. "You know which way the winds are blowing and are not afraid to push back against the forces that would privatize our classrooms or marginalize our roles as educators.

You do this, together, in union with your other CTA brothers and sisters across the state. And you do it in the face of all the teacher-bashing and scapegoating that's been going on recently."

He reminded members of how highly the public regards educators, offering hope for the battles that lie ahead.

"You should know that no matter what cheap shots our adversaries are taking at us in the media, our latest polling shows teachers are still among the most valued and respected members in our communities. When you speak, people listen."



Q&A

ELAINE BERNARD, HEAD OF THE HARVARD TRADE UNION PROGRAM, SPOKE AT BOTH THE REGION I AND REGION II LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES. WE CAUGHT UP WITH HER TO DISCUSS HER VIEWS ON UNIONS AND THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE ACTION. READ THAT INTERVIEW AT WWW.CTA.ORG/BERNARDQA.

story continued on page 40 ▶

ACTION

Ravitch to speak in California

Chapter-sponsored events to be held in January in Sacramento, San Francisco and Los Angeles.

ONCE AN EDUCATIONAL conservative and an early supporter of President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind policy, Diane Ravitch has shaken up the education world by doing a complete about-face on testing, accountability, and the merits of charter schools.

In the process, she has become a champion of educators who show up every day to teach their students.

Through her speeches, her appearances on popular shows such as Jon Stewart's "The Daily Show," her tweets, and her best-selling book, *The Death and Life of the Great American School System*, Ravitch continues to take on the privatizers, the charter school movement, and those who have little understanding of what goes on in the American classroom.

That's why three CTA chapters in three urban areas are taking advantage of a visit by Diane Ravitch to host several public events in January. Sponsoring talks by Ravitch will be United Teachers Los Angeles, United Educators of San Francisco (co-sponsored by CTA and the California Federation of Teachers), and the Sacramento City Teachers Association.

Nine local associations have joined together to bring Ravitch to the Sacramento Convention Center on Jan. 20. The Sacramento City Teachers Association, which spearheaded the effort, is especially hoping to get Ravitch's message out to a community that has been heavily pressured by Sacramento Mayor Kevin Johnson and his wife, Michelle Rhee, the former schools chief in Washington, D.C. Both have advocated radical reforms that include firing teachers, closing underperforming schools, and linking teacher and principal pay to student test scores.

"We're very excited that Dr. Ravitch is coming to Sacramento, and we're expecting educators and the public to come from throughout the region to see her," says SCTA President Scott Smith. "At a time when teachers are under attack, she has a message that must get out."



See Diane Ravitch

"An Evening With Diane Ravitch" will be held at the Sacramento Convention Center at 7 p.m., Jan. 20. For tickets, call the Sacramento City Teachers Association, (916) 452-4591.

Ravitch will also speak in Los Angeles Jan. 17 and San Francisco Jan. 18. Information about venues will be posted at www.cta.org/ravichtour.

Programs for California Educators at One of America's Best Colleges*

Credentials and Certificates

- Multiple and Single Subject
- Administrative
- CTEL
- Education Counseling
- School Psychology
- Special Education: Mild/Moderate
- Reading and Language Arts
- Child Life Specialist

Bachelors

- Liberal Studies
- Child Development

Masters

- Educational Management
- School Counseling
- School Psychology
- Special Education
- Reading
- Special Emphasis
- Child Life
- Child Development
- Advanced Teaching

Doctoral

- Organizational Leadership (Ed.D.)

* U.S. News & World Report and Forbes Magazine



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

College of Education and Organizational Leadership
1950 Third Street, La Verne, California 91750

- Small classes
- Programs throughout California
- Flexible scheduling
- CCTC approved
- WASC accredited



Protect your income with Disability Insurance from The Standard.

You work hard for your money. But what if you couldn't work due to an illness or injury? Take steps to protect your income with CTA-endorsed Disability Insurance from The Standard. Choose the plan designed to meet the needs of educators like you and supported by a CTA-dedicated customer service team. Learn how The Standard can protect what's important to you at cta.org/thestandard.



For costs and further details of the coverage, including exclusions, benefit waiting periods, 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.3 SI 15884-CTAvol

ACTION

Governor proposes 'hybrid' pension reform

CTA has concerns and will work for changes

WITH CRIES FOR pension reform coming from all corners, it's no surprise the governor has gotten into the act and unveiled a 12-point plan for teachers and public employees that will likely — in some form — be headed to the November 2012 ballot for voters to decide.

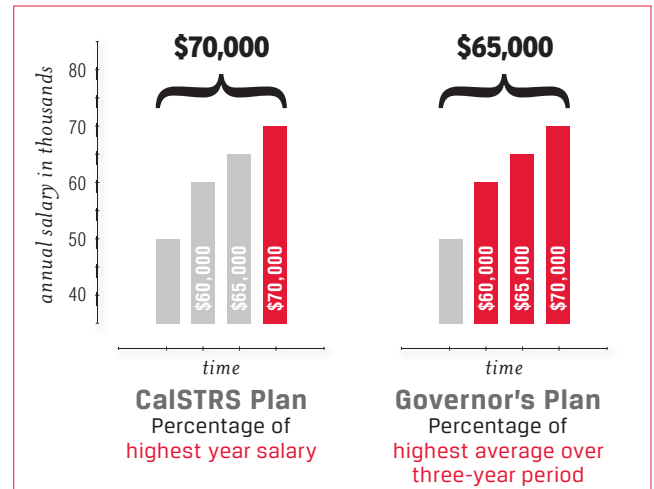
- Introduced in late October, the governor's plan is not without controversy. Among the 12 points are proposals to:
- Implement a "hybrid plan" that combines the current employer-sponsored "defined-benefit" pension with a risky 401(k)-style "defined-contribution" plan.
- Increase the retirement age of teachers and public employees from 60 to 67.
- Change the one-year highest compensation to the highest average annual compensation over a three-year period. (See chart.)

But it's important to remember that this is only a starting point. The proposal will go through the legislative process with multiple public hearings and opportunities for input

and changes. CTA will make sure the Legislature and the governor have full knowledge of teachers' concerns.

"We share in the governor's vision of having a strong retirement system for educators, but at the same time, we have concerns about some of these proposals and what the impact will be on the retirement benefits of educators and public education," says CTA President Dean E. Vogel. "That's why CTA is taking the lead on this issue. We are meeting with key legislators and are working closely with other labor and education stakeholders. We want to make sure this doesn't limit the state's ability to recruit teachers."

Of particular concern is the governor's proposal to implement a hybrid plan, which



would put teachers' historically stable defined-benefit plan at risk and make it susceptible to the whims of Wall Street.

"The governor's proposal would force teachers to become financial experts by having to manage their own investments through

story continued on page 41 ▶



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Leading-edge Learning

DREXEL PREPARES TOMORROW'S LEADERS



Employees of California Community Colleges receive 40 percent tuition assistance towards Drexel's master's degree programs.

Visit our website for details and upcoming information sessions.

EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

Drexel University at the Center for Graduate Studies in Sacramento offers a solid and dynamic path of academic and technological innovation for today's education administrators.

Programs offered include:

- **Ed.D. in Educational Leadership and Management:** A rigorous, professional practitioner's degree in a blended delivery format that combines on campus classes with transcontinental online education.
- **M.S. in Higher Education*:** Students undergo rigorous preparation to lead in complex administrative and management positions in university and college offices, national and international associations and organizations, government agencies, foundations, and corporations in the U.S. and around the world.
- **M.S. in Human Resource Development*:** Students learn strategic human capital leadership with competencies to facilitate employee and organizational learning, performance and change in a variety of workplace settings.

*These programs are now available in our new Executive Weekend format (one Friday evening/Saturday each month).

For more information, call 916.325.4600 or email sacramento@drexel.edu.

drexel.edu/sacramento

LIVE IT.



Start protecting what's important through this special opportunity.

Newly-hired CTA members, and those new to their district, have an exclusive opportunity to protect their income and loved ones. If you apply for coverage in the first 120 days after your hire date, you have a special opportunity to get CTA-endorsed Disability and Life Insurance from The Standard.

This is a great time to get Disability Insurance. You can also get up to \$200,000 of Life Insurance without proof of good health. Plus, there are family Life Insurance coverage options with your Life Insurance. This offer is only available for a limited time. Protect what's important to you by enrolling today.

For more information, call **800.522.0406**. To apply online, visit cta.org/thestandard.



For costs and further details of the coverage and this enrollment opportunity, including exclusions, benefit waiting periods, 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.3 GP 190-LIFE/S399/CTA.3 SI 15887-CTAvol

CTA BOARD EXPENSES

► continued from page 35

REGION II: BRINGING LEADERS TOGETHER

There were a lot of reasons to be first-timers at the Region II Leadership Conference in Reno. With a distance of 535 miles from Yreka in the north to Bakersfield in the south, Region II is geographically the largest of CTA's four regions, bringing together both large urban and small rural chapters. The annual conference is one of the ways that Region II overcomes that distance.

"I'm interested in finding out all that CTA has to offer," said Melissa Shepherd, a site representative and member of the Lodi Education Association. "I had no idea there was so much."

With more than 65 elective sessions, the more than 500 educators in attendance



Ronda Fish

were able to choose from trainings that covered bargaining, building relationships with school boards, survival skills for leaders during trying times, Robert's Rules of Order simplified, understanding poverty, when bullying is no longer just teasing, grievances,

and other topics. Throughout the weekend, members were able to learn from experienced trainers as well as one another.

"You meet people that have the same situation and find out you're not alone," said Ronda Fish, president of the Pacheco District Teachers Association. "I feel empowered to know that I don't have to cover before my school board."

Members even sang the praises of a training on a potentially dreary topic like Robert's Rules of Order.

"Robert and I are not on 'intimate' terms, and this was absolutely fabulous!" said Lisa Buckner, who will carry out parliamentary duties in the Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association this year. "It was very informative. You cannot go away from these trainings and not learn something."

In his address, President Vogel singled out several chapters that have engaged in successful organizing efforts:

- The Calaveras Unified Educators Association, which packed school

ALCALÁ* (O)	1,890.42
ALLEN (A)	3,486.62
BOYD (E)	3,523.48
BRIDGE (K)	3,529.13
CABELL (L)	4,036.44
CICHOCKI (O)	3,364.63
DAVIDSON (F)	4,043.21
DAWSON (B)	2,488.16
DILLON (D)	3,755.57
GOLDBERG (J-LA)	2,256.86
GROTH (P)	3,277.11
HEINS (C)	6,550.15
JACKSON* (C)	1,127.13
MEEDEN (At-Large)	4,187.07
MELENDEZ (H)	5,288.45
MENDES*	2,278.52
MONTAÑO (J-HE)	3,647.36
ORTEGA (J-LA)	3,268.41
PEÑA (G)	8,686.92
ROGERS* (M)	3,025.11
SANCHEZ*	9,623.39
SHATUN (I)	4,007.10
STERNBERGER* (CTA/NEA Coordinator)	1,447.17
STONE (N)	5,406.51
VOGEL	4,089.03
WALSH*	1,964.80
WASHINGTON (At-Large)	2,521.91



Amounts represent a monthly average for fiscal year 2010-11. During the reporting year, the normal and statewide activities include CTA Board meetings, State Council, Service Center Council 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 geographical sizes of directorial districts, distances traveled for Regional, Service Center and other meetings, and the varied number of functions CTA Directors are responsible for attending. Expenses of Board members with partial-year service are averaged based on months served and delineated with an asterisk.

board meetings, worked with parents and was able to announce the restoration of five and a half positions.

- The Hanford Elementary Teachers Association, which gained community support by holding book drives and blood drives, and participating in events to clean up the community. Through its increased presence in the community, the association was successful in keeping its fully paid medical benefits intact and taking no days off the calendar.
- The Sierra Unified Teachers Association (SUTA), which helped grow its membership to 65 members over the past two years once it focused its attention on



Lisa Buckner

organizing, and sent a team of members to the Organizing for Power training last spring.

"The most important thing we can do in this organization is to organize, and I know Region II has taken that to heart," Vogel said. "You have committed yourselves to building an organizing culture. From attending small group meetings to larger Organizing for Power trainings, you are listening to each other, building relationships, and finding the connections you need to continue this valuable work."

By Mike Myslinski and Dina Martin

► continued from page 38

401(k)-style plans,” says Maggie Ellis, chair of CTA’s Retirement Committee on State Council. “That may be fun for some, but most educators want to focus on teaching, and not on playing the stock market.”

Besides, Ellis notes, the State Teachers’ Retirement System (CalSTRS) already offers a supplementary hybrid plan. For example, in order to prevent pension spiking, CalSTRS requires that the pay a high school history teacher may earn from extra coaching duties be placed into a separate supplemental defined-benefit plan that is then managed by CalSTRS.

Converting the defined-benefit plan into a hybrid is not CTA’s only concern. After working an average of 25 years in the profession, many educators are not thrilled with the aspect of working an additional seven years before they can receive their full retirement benefits.

“Teaching is a difficult and demanding job. Although we have members who work more than 40 years, many of our members look forward to being able to retire at 60, after an entire career in public service — and they deserve to,” Vogel says. “This is an area where we will disagree with the governor, and will work to change.”

Another proposal in the governor’s plan requiring that retirement be based on the highest three years of compensation rather than the current highest year is also not necessary for CalSTRS since it already exists for educators who work less than 25 years.

“This has been shown to be an effective tool for incentivizing educators to stay in the classroom longer, something that is desperately needed given the state’s teacher shortage,” Vogel says.

The second-largest public pension fund in the country, CalSTRS has been providing retirement security to teachers since its inception in 1913. Still, the economic downturn affecting the rest of the country has also had an impact on the retirement plan, resulting in a long-term funding shortfall.

“What is needed now is a plan of action to address that long-term funding shortfall, and that’s something only the Legislature and the governor have the authority to do. By bringing them together with stakeholders, we can come up with an appropriate adjustment without making such drastic changes to the entire system,” Vogel says. “We’re confident that can happen.”

By **Dina Martin and Jennifer Baker**

Ask About Our
\$2,500 Reward Scholarship

...with educational justice for all.

Focus on Educational Justice

Earn your graduate degree in a program dedicated to narrowing the achievement gap. Help America’s students, regardless of background, receive a quality public education.

Degree & Credential Programs

- Coming Soon! ■ Special Education Credential (11 months)
- New! ■ Clinical Mental Health Advanced Training Certificate (1 year)
- New! ■ Spatial Literacy for Educators Certificate* (15 months) Online!
- Teaching Credential (10 months)
- Professional Credential (7-24 months)
- MA in Education
 - Counseling (2 years)
 - Curriculum and Instruction (15-24 months)
 - Educational Administration (2 years)
 - Higher Education (2 years)
- Doctorate in Leadership for Educational Justice (Ed.D.)* (minimum 3 years)

* Not eligible for the Reward Scholarship.



UNIVERSITY OF
Redlands
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Education+

(800) 862-8291 | RedlandsDegrees.com

Apple Valley | Redlands | Santa Ana | Temecula

Love Birds

Some fly away.
Some stay forever.
College professor
Jeff Black
researches why.

BIRDS OF A FEATHER may flock together, but the findings of CSU Humboldt professor Jeff Black show that personalities also come into play when it comes to building a nest and staying faithful.

Black, a member of the California Faculty Association, is an expert on fowl behavior and fascinated by what makes some relationships soar and others run aground.

He has studied two dozen species of birds including Aleutian, barnacle, brant and Canada geese. He was an editor of *Partnerships in Birds*, a book in which scientists around the world analyze data about birds. Courses that he teaches include Wildlife Techniques, Waterfowl Ecology and Management, Wildlife Ethology, and Behavioral Ecology. He completed a textbook/monograph, *Wild Goose Dilemmas* (2007), which compiles new highlights from a 25-year study of arctic geese traveling between nesting, staging, and wintering grounds. The book is about how individuals solve daily, seasonal and lifetime problems while striving to survive and reproduce.

“Lots of studies in the ’80s and ’90s showed that birds were not all that faithful,” says Black, who received his doctorate in zoology from the University of Wales in 2001. “But my work is mostly with geese and swans, which are renowned for being monogamous.”

While other species take flight from commitment, geese and swans are, well,



different. Black’s research has led him to label this as “extreme monogamy,” describing it as “every minute of every day for a very long time.”

Monogamous birds, like people, change their behavior after years and years of togetherness, he has observed. His research has shown that geese and swans communicate differently as they get older, in terms of honking.

“After being together every minute every day for 25 years of life, always being right next to each other, they talk louder,” says Black. When asked if it’s a problem with their hearing or if they simply start tuning each other out, he stops to think about it.

“I think they do it because they can.”

Last year he began studying local Steller’s jays, commonly known as blue jays. He is trying to determine why some pairs of male and female blue jays last and others stay together only temporarily. It may depend on personality traits, such as whether a bold male and shy female last longer, or vice versa. Black has been observing their behavior on bird feeders and has tagged

many of the “locals” with different colors for males and females.

“The goal of this exercise is to practice identifying behavioral cues for determining the mating system in this jay society,” Black says. “Steller’s jays appear to concentrate their daily activity around a home site where they roost each night, but much of the day is spent foraging in adjacent redwoods or gathering in larger social groups. Each pair and associated full-grown offspring vary in the amount of time they spend together; some pairs always travel together, and others rarely do.”

Black is also engaged in “citizen science,” asking those in the Humboldt area to send him their observations about birds and river otters.

Would he ever consider studying humans?

“No,” he replies quickly. “I’ll stick with birds.”

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin



University of San Diego

DIVISION OF CONTINUING EDUCATION
Programs for Educators



Independent Study, Online and Scheduled Classes REGISTERING NOW!

Improve Writing Skills!

Assessing the Traits of Writing
3 Semester Units

Ideas and Organization
2 Semester Units

Writing with Self-Analysis and Revision
1 Semester Unit

Voice
1 Semester Unit

Word Choice
1 Semester Unit

Sentence Fluency
1 Semester Unit

Designed for teachers who do not necessarily teach writing as a subject but do use writing as a tool in teaching their subject. Students who have been introduced to the method can improve their own writing skills leaving you free to concentrate on the subject matter.

ART SERIES

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

Teaching Art to Children

Art Attack

Teaching Classroom Art Lessons



Professional Teachers Program

Teacher Online Course Series
3 Semester Units • \$500

Spring Session starts MARCH 12 register now!

*Add Time to Your Life...
Online Learning at Your Pace...
16 Great Courses to Choose From!*

- Math Is Not Only Numbers: Infusing Literacy and Brain Research in Teaching Math Concepts and Skills
- Teaching Social Skills
- Inclusion
- Working with Families
- Differentiation
- How To Use The Internet In Your Classroom
- Smart Use of Your Interactive Whiteboard in the Classroom
- Reading and Writing in the Digital Age Literacy
- Making the Most of Web 2.0 in the Classroom
- Promoting Healthy Lifestyle Skills
- Literacy (3 courses)
- Classroom Management (Elementary & Secondary)
- Aligning Standards

ONLINE PROFESSIONAL GROWTH COURSES

MORE ONLINE COURSES STARTING IN JANUARY!

Bullying: An Introduction (Prerequisite) - 2 units

Bullying: Issues of Gender and Race - 2 units

Bullying on the Internet - 2 units

Bullying: Prevention - 2 units

Classroom Management and Conflict Resolution - 3 units

Transitioning from the Classroom to Administration - 3 units

Understanding Data for the Secondary Classroom - 3 units

SALE!

PROJECT INFORM

Just in time for your holiday reading!

Many NEW non-fiction bestsellers just added to our official booklet!

3 Units for the Price of 2!

Now through February 28, 2012, purchase two registrations for Project Inform online and receive a third one at no charge. (see website for details)

Historian Barbara Tuchman once described books as being the carriers of civilization. **Project Inform** encourages educators to view reading as a worthwhile activity and to see it as a potent avenue for professional growth. The cost is minimal; the rewards are endless.

Our most popular course... on SALE once again!



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

You may enroll in multiple classes.

Looking for Scheduled Classes?

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

www.usd-online.org





“The best benefits and lowest price for teachers.”

“When I was a new single mom, I had to get my own insurance and compared a lot of different insurance companies. I discovered that California Casualty was the best insurance for me because it had the best benefits and rates for teachers.”

Get your no-obligation quote for auto & home insurance.

1-888-744-9717

www.calcas.com/cta



Ann K.
Educator
Protected by
California Casualty

EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS

\$0 Vehicle Vandalism Deductible

\$500 Personal Property Coverage

Summer/Holiday Skip Payment Option

Generous Additional Discounts



California Casualty
WE PROTECT AMERICAN HEROES®

