

california educator

SEPTEMBER 2015 VOLUME 20 ISSUE 2

TECH SUPPORT

Or are teachers left to their own devices? **PAGE 24**

LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAMS

PAGE 54



Need for Ethnic Studies
PAGE 44

Students: Rising Anxiety
PAGE 30

Best Organizing Apps
PAGE 14

NEW
SECTION

**YOUR
WHOLE LIFE**

PAGE 16

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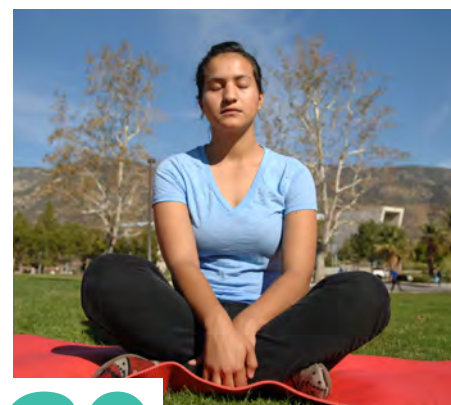
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- 3 **Feedback**
- 5 **President's Message**
- 7 **Editor's Note**
- 8 **Calendar**
- 10 **CTA Online**
- 60 **Extra Credit**



30

High Anxiety

Educators help students cope with debilitating anxiety through counseling, meditation and more.

Features

24

Tech Support?

At some sites, educators share knowledge and train one another. At others, they're left to their own devices. What's working, and why.



Students and teachers explore the brave new world of tech.

New contest!



SEE ME AFTER SCHOOL

Page 3



Know&Tell 13

- 14 **Tech tips:** Organizing apps
- 15 **Quotes & Numbers:** In the news
- 16 **Your Whole Life:** Foot care, stress, pets
- 18 **Health:** Indoor air quality

Perspectives 21

- 22 **Point/Counterpoint:** Ethnic studies
- 23 **Spotlight:** Chemistry teacher Maureen Rymer

Advocacy 35

- 36 **Legislation:** Charter schools, district reserves
- 38 **Profile:** Assembly Member Tony Thurmond
- 39 **Bargaining:** Statewide advocacy activities
- 40 **Media Campaign:** "I Got It!"

Learning 43

- 44 **Education trends:** The call for ethnic studies
- 48 **Sharing:** What we did this summer

CTA&You 53

- 54 **Personal finance:** Loan forgiveness programs
- 56 **Honored:** César Chávez Award winners
- 58 **Grants:** Institute for Teaching
- 59 **State Council:** CTA bylaw amendment

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

CODING IS COOL

Thank you so much for this article in the April *Educator*. This is the message I have been promoting for years. A few additional points for why computer science should be taught in schools:

- Computers are everywhere! You find them in cellphones, coffee makers, microwave ovens, ATM machines. Your vehicle has thousands of lines of code.
- Most fields are impacted by computers. Hadi Partovi in *Newsweek* states: "The world around us is being completely changed by technology in every field. Whether you want to go into banking, medicine, law, politics, transportation, entertainment, retail, every single field is impacted significantly by computers and software."
- Computational thinking is a skill that is needed in all fields and is taught in computer science. Linda Luikas, founder of Rails Girls coding organization, states: "The ability to speak and structure your thinking in a way a computer understands it will be one of the core future skills, whatever your field."

Resources for teachers:

- Computer Science Teachers Association (CSTA) — csta.acm.org
- CSTA K-8 Twitter Chats by Sheena Vaidyanathan, CSTA K-8 representative and Los Altos teacher — visit the G+ page at tinyurl.com/K8CSTA
- National Center for Women & Information Technology — ncwit.org

Myra Deister

Fullerton Secondary Teachers Association



PAY IS IMPORTANT, TOO

The most popular Facebook post as reported in the August *California Educator* (page 10) included the statement: "I am a teacher: I am not in it for the income, I am in it for the outcome." While this is a catchy, clever sentence, as well as an admired sentiment, we actually do ourselves a disservice by this either/or framing. There is nothing wrong or contradictory with simultaneously expecting a good income for the important work we do and being dedicated to positive outcomes for our students. Somehow, the frequently accepted perspective — and one that we, as educators, often internalize — is that people whose work involves providing a public good shouldn't be so crass as to want (and need) good pay as well.

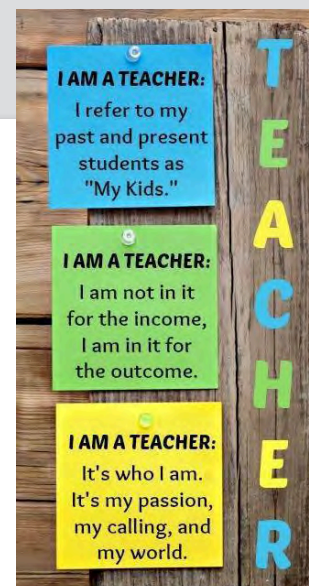
In San Francisco, as in many cities around the country, we are experiencing an affordability crisis, caused by extremely high housing costs, which is driving an increasing number of our members out of the city, our schools and our profession. Our students' families are suffering as well, as rents rise and evictions continue.

Though pay isn't everything, it is not an insignificant thing. One way to show respect is by paying people well. We must stop devaluing our work, which in turn devalues public education and our students.

Susan Solomon,

Executive Vice President

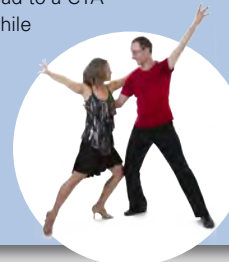
United Educators of San Francisco



CONTEST: "SEE ME AFTER SCHOOL"

What do you do after the last bell rings? Tutor? Coach? Take salsa lessons? Maybe you volunteer at church or in your community, or head to a CTA workshop. Or maybe you just decompress at the local café (probably while grading homework).

You can win a \$50 gift card for school supplies by showing us what you do. Send up to three photos of you in action after school hours to editor@cta.org. Be sure to put "See Me After School" in the subject line, and include your name, your chapter, and a description of the photos. We'll pick three winners based on creativity, photography and interest. **Deadline is Nov. 25.**





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NC050915

Class Acts

in Singapore and Shanghai

Inspiring that “I got it!” moment and seeing it on our students’ faces is what drove many of us into the education profession. Being part of changing lives and creating the future is the “rush of teaching,” which CTA celebrates in our back-to-school media campaign (see story on page 40). As I visited schools in Singapore and China in late August, I discovered that this rush is international. I also discovered that concerns about high-stakes testing are equally international.

Finnish educator and scholar Pasi Sahlberg raises these concerns when he warns against what he calls the Global Education Reform Movement, or GERM. GERM is the standardization of education with a focus on test-based accountability policies, corporatization, and investment in low-risk ways to reach learning goals.

I visited two so-called high-performing education systems to which the United States is frequently compared: Singapore and Shanghai. I also talked with educators and met with the education unions.

MOVING AWAY FROM TESTS

In Singapore, the environment of the schools and the commitment of the teachers to their students are much the same as in the U.S. I felt right at home there; I could have stepped in front of the class and started teaching.

There is, however, a very high-stakes test at the end of primary school. The test scores determine whether a student goes into the academic (university) track or the technical training (polytechnic) track. The exam is highly stressful for both students and families, and Singapore educators are speaking out against it. They are looking to move away from an absolute cutoff number and toward a range of scores. The line is also starting to blur between academic and technical education, with some students choosing to go through technical training and still attend a university.

Meanwhile, Shanghai is considering not having students participate in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests. Instead, they want to

focus on sound educational principles that lay a solid foundation for students’ lifelong development.

In significant contrast to the U.S., public education in both Singapore and Shanghai is well-funded and considered a priority to the economy and future. The governments offer strong support to teachers to improve their practice. The emphasis is on teaching the whole child and supporting the whole teacher. The systems are highly structured in terms of expectations and curriculum, but how to teach is left up to the teacher.

CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In Singapore, for example, the National Institute of Education prepares teachers and provides professional development. Teachers choose from three tracks. One leads to school leadership, similar to principals in the U.S. The second leads to becoming a curriculum or instructional leader — like a master teacher or mentor. The third offers teachers continuous support for improving their craft and becoming better educators.

The role of the union is different in Singapore and Shanghai. In Singapore, unions face issues similar to what CTA is facing now — the importance of leading educational change and reaching out to and engaging all members in the work of the union.

Shanghai’s union is funded through the government, and members themselves pay very little. Funding includes mental health centers. I visited a newer center that offers confidential mental health and counseling services and is staffed 24/7. One of the main issues they deal with is job-related stress. The center includes a punching machine, and a scream machine that measures the decibels in one’s scream — something we all could use from time to time.

It was an interesting trip, and I thank the UCLA Labor Center for inviting me to attend. As we join together in California to stand up for our students and the future of public education, it’s comforting to know we are not alone. We are part of a global movement that understands students are more than a test score, and the art of teaching lies in that “I got it!” moment.



◀ With Koh Yiak Keng, principal of Palm View Primary School in Singapore, and my host Seet Ying Ling Britta.

Eric C. Heins

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2015, to Aug. 31, 2016) are \$829, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see cta.org/contribution for details). Up to \$18.40 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.

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

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Editor's
Note

Get Out of Debt



When it comes to student loan forgiveness programs, there's money being left on the table. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau says one-quarter of the U.S. workforce could qualify for favorable loan repayment options for those in public-service fields, including education. But relatively few take advantage of them.

It's an awareness issue that we address in "Lower That Loan" (page 54). Educators with college debt often don't realize they might be able to have their loans reduced or erased, or that payments can be based on income. Eligibility for programs varies, and the application process is complex. But no one should walk away from free money.

Our cover story this month, "Tech Support" (page 24), looks at teachers' tech literacy. New apps and programs to teach, communicate and get organized seem to pop up every nanosecond, and with educators' packed schedules, it's hard to keep up. We showcase several sites throughout the state where teachers successfully carve out precious time to share knowledge and train one another — and their students.

On the other hand, despite good intentions, some districts fail to provide effective tech training and support. And some educators are reluctant or anxious about stepping into what appears to be a confusing vortex. Our story's tech-savvy teachers offer a few ways to build up your confidence.

Speaking of feeling anxious, you'll want to read about rising rates of debilitating anxiety among students (page 30). The spike is due, experts say, to increased expectations and pressures on young people in the classroom, at home and on social media. Educators can help students cope through counseling, mindfulness and meditation exercises, and by simply allowing them space.

Two articles in this issue grapple with the need for ethnic studies classes. There's no question that California's diverse student population demands different perspectives when teaching history and social studies. But whether ethnic studies should be a requirement or an elective is a hot topic. Members voice their opinions in "Point/Counterpoint" (page 22), and you'll grasp what's happening in class right now in "Inclusive Points of View" (page 44).

Finally, we've started a new standing feature called "Your Whole Life" (page 16). As the name implies, it recognizes educators' broader existence beyond school, and offers useful tips and trends for a smarter, healthier you. Let me know what you'd like to see in it at editor@cta.org.

Katharine Fong
EDITOR IN CHIEF

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California Teachers Study Update

Started in 1995, the **California Teachers Study (CTS)** is a longitudinal health study of 133,479 female current and former public school teachers and school administrators. Its top priority has been to find the causes of breast cancer, but it is also used to understand women's health issues more broadly, including risk factors of other cancers, asthma, cardiovascular disease, stroke and overall longevity. CTS researchers are currently collecting blood and saliva samples from 22,000 healthy CTS participants to use in the search for biomarkers of future cancer. Those who want to contribute samples can contact the Cancer Prevention Institute of California at cpic.org.



Green Schools Gathering

California has long recognized that schools are often the first place students encounter systematic efforts to conserve energy and water and reduce waste, and where they become environmentally literate and understand how human needs and activities fit into the greater ecosystems.

The **Green California Schools and Community Colleges Summit**, Oct. 29-30 at Pasadena Convention Center, will explore new ways to create healthy, green learning environments. This year's theme is "Achieving the Benefits of High Performance Schools," highlighting economic, educational and community benefits that districts have gained by making a commitment to sustainability. In addition to dozens of educational sessions, the annual Leadership Awards recognize outstanding projects at California campuses. Keynotes and exhibit hall are free; to register, go to green-technology.org or call 626-577-5700.

SEPTEMBER 29
APPLICATION DEADLINE
ESP Leadership Academy

This training is for 20 education support professional members interested in chapter leadership roles. Accepted participants will be reimbursed for travel, lodging, meals and fees. Session 1 will be Nov. 6-8. Session 2 will be Feb. 26-28, 2016. Both sessions will be in Burlingame. Find out more: Email kmoriarty@cta.org or call 415-479-6616

OCTOBER 9-11 CONFERENCE
Region II Leadership Conference

Grand Sierra Resort, Reno, Nevada

Do you have what it takes to be an association leader? Learn the ropes or increase your skill set. Find out more:

cta.org/conferences

OCTOBER 15
APPLICATION DEADLINE
NEA Foundation Grants

The NEA Foundation awards grants to educators: Student Achievement Grants support improving academic achievement; Learning and Leadership Grants support high-quality professional development activities. Applications are reviewed three times a year. Find out more: neafoundation.org

OCTOBER 16-18 CONFERENCE
CCA Fall Conference

DoubleTree by Hilton, San Jose

The Community College Association's fall conference focuses on members' accomplishments and membership engagement. Find out more:

cca4me.org

NOVEMBER 1 OPT-OUT DEADLINE
Voluntary dues contribution

Voluntary annual contributions by members support CTA Foundation's grants/scholarships and CTA's advocacy efforts. New members are automatically enrolled in the default contribution of \$10 for the CTA Foundation and \$10 for advocacy. Members may change their allocation or opt out. New members have 30 days from the date of enrollment; previously enrolled members have a window from Aug. 1 to Nov. 1. Find out more:

cta.org/contribution

NOVEMBER 13-15 CONFERENCE
GLBT Conference

Fairmont Hotel, San Jose

CTA's Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Conference is open to all CTA members and addresses issues affecting the entire membership, students and the community. Apply for minority and small-chapter incentive grants by Sept. 29. Find out more:

cta.org/conferences



Make Schools Safe for GLBT Persons

Need help creating a special presentation or project that promotes understanding and respect for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons? CTA's **GLBT Guy DeRosa Safety in Schools Grant and Scholarship Program** provides grants up to \$2,500 for these efforts, as well as scholarships for members enrolled in a teacher/counseling credential or graduate program who understand the importance of GLBT educators as role models.

The program promotes human and civil rights by making our public schools safe for GLBT persons. It's named in memory of CTA member and educator Guy DeRosa, a lifelong GLBT activist. Application deadline is Nov. 20. Find out more:

cta.org/scholarships

NOVEMBER 16-20 EVENT
American Education Week

"Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility." American Education Week is celebrated the week prior to Thanksgiving week and includes special observances to honor parents, education support professionals and substitute teachers. Find out more:

nea.org/aew



Believe in Your Ideas

What Do You Do With an Idea? is a 2015-16 California Reads recommendation for first- and second-graders, but it works its magic on all ages. Written by Kobi Yamada and illustrated by Mae Besom, it tells the story of one brilliant idea and the child who helps bring it into the world. As the child's confidence grows, so does the idea, until one day something amazing happens. This beautifully illustrated story will inspire students to welcome their ideas, give them space to grow and see what happens next. For more recommended books, see cta.org/californiareads.



What's new at cta.org

[cta.org/ septemberawareness](http://cta.org/septemberawareness)

HONOR LABOR IN SEPTEMBER

Beginning with Labor Day, September is a month to focus on the importance of the labor movement. Check out our Labor History page for information and resources.

cta.org/ctacommittees

GETTING IT DONE

Ever wonder how CTA conducts business? Policy committees and advisory groups meet several times a year, working with the CTA Board and State Council.

cta.org/charterschools

CHARTER SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

CTA is co-sponsoring a package of bills to increase charter school accountability and transparency. Watch the informational briefing video.

cta.org/taxfairness

MAKE IT FAIR!

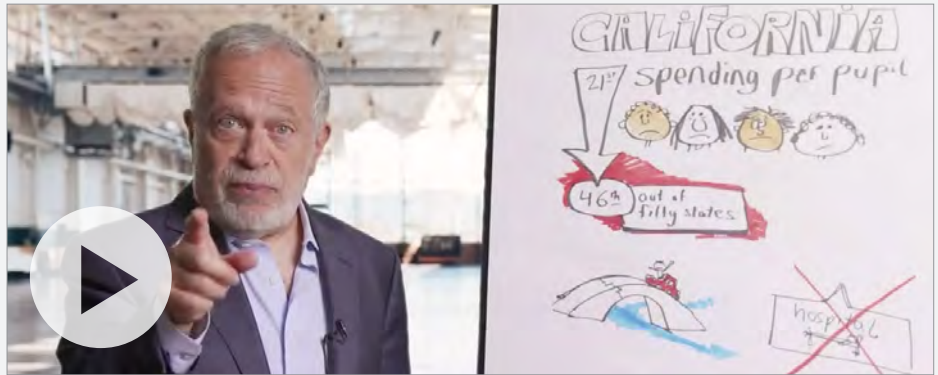
Check out new materials — and watch videos by former U.S. Labor Secretary Robert Reich — on tax fairness and closing the loopholes of Prop. 13.

cta.org/ongoingissues

POSITION PAGES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

See CTA's positions on a host of issues, including recent issues like ESEA reauthorization and Common Core, and ongoing issues like bargaining and retirement.

Video



CLOSE DANGEROUS CORPORATE TAX LOOPHOLES: Robert Reich discusses the critical need for California to close the loopholes of Prop. 13 and bring in an additional \$9 billion to invest in local schools and communities. youtube.com/user/CaliforniaTeachers

Social Buzz

“YOU SPENT HOW MUCH ON SCHOOL SUPPLIES?” Each year, teachers spend upwards of \$500 of their own money on supplies such as tissues, hand sanitizers, wipes, pencils, erasers, paper, glue, scissors, markers, poster boards, photocopies and snacks. Here's what a few members say they buy out of pocket; for more, see CTA's Facebook page and search for “supplies”:

ANN STUDE

Student whiteboards and markers, spiral notebooks (I currently have 200 in the back of my car), bulletin board supplies, videos to supplement learning, copy paper, tissues, supplies for parent Christmas and Mother's Day gifts, costumes for performances, binders for kids who don't have one, backpacks for those same kids... the list is endless.

AMY BROWNFIELD

Our budget is only \$275 for the year! There is no way that we can buy all of those supplies, plus ink cartridges and other items. I just spent \$250 for my own room and paid another \$250 for my former student teacher to start his new classroom. Years ago my master teacher set me up in my classroom, so I wanted to pay it forward!

CLAUDIA REIS LAMONICA

Batteries for classroom technology. So expensive!

LISA HICKMAN

iPad apps, magazine holders for workshop space (each kid has to have a place for their 10 books), stools so more kids fit at a table or computer area, air fresheners, book shelves to hold all my books, folders... It's thousands each year.

CARRIE WEBB PATINO

I've taught 27 years and spent \$34,000 on classroom supplies and necessities. Now my district is only supplying 18 reams of paper for the entire school year. With 24 students, that works out to only 2 copies per student per day, including homework.

MARYSUE CARL

I teach high school. My students tell me that I am the only one who has tissues in my room. Many teachers won't let them leave the room to go to the restroom to blow their nose. I will NOT allow a student to suffer or be embarrassed because their nose is running.

TAMIE LUTZ

Guess I'm lucky. My district pays for all that. Just need to put in a request.

CARRIE JACOBSON

This year I had to buy my own desk chair. I'd transferred to a school with zero resources, and all they had for me was a stool. That is on top of the \$400 I've spent on pens, markers, paper, etc. I also have an extreme limit on the amount of copies I can make. How do you have students annotate if you can't afford to pay for the paper and ink it takes to make enough copies for each student?

Top Post

I wish my students knew...



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Know&Tell

INSIDE:

- 14** Tech Tips
- 15** Quotes & Numbers
- 16** Your Whole Life
- 18** The Air Inside
(Your Classroom)

"That **pet insurance** you bought is giving us both some peace of mind — but I *still* hate going to the vet!"

See the new "Your Whole Life" section on **page 16**.



Get Organized!

By Terry Ng

GET YOUR CLASSES and to-do's in order. There are great apps and programs that can help, some tailored to teachers, and others you can customize to handle all of life's lists, notes, tasks and projects — with reminders of when they're due. Among the best:



▲ **TeacherKit** — Routine class administration is a breeze: Keep track of attendance and grades, add notes for individual students, and get snapshot summaries or detail-rich student records for as many classes as you want. Create seating plans. Email directly from the app.

Teacherkit.net



▲ **Evernote** — Simply gather everything that matters, such as Web articles, handwritten notes and photos. Track tasks. Write and present with ease. Share, collaborate and discuss in real time. Automatically syncs your devices with your computer. Evernote.com



▲ **Google Now** — From knowing the weather before you start your day, to planning the best route to avoid traffic, get the information you want, when you need it. Tell your phone to send a text message, get directions or call a friend.

Google.com/now



▲ **Dropbox** — A home for all your photos, docs and videos. Anything you add to Dropbox automatically shows up on all your computers, devices and even the Dropbox website, so you can access and share it with friends and colleagues from anywhere.

Dropbox.com



Wunderlist

◀ **Wunderlist** — Makes collaboration easy. Share lists and work with colleagues, students, families. Handle reminders, notes, due dates and more. Manage multiple work projects. Access from any device. Wunderlist.com

Quotes & Numbers

WE COMB THE MEDIA DAILY for the best quotes and statistics about public education. If you discover a quote or stat you think we should highlight, send it along with your name to editor@cta.org.

Compiled by Mike Myslinski

“THE PAST IS NEVER DEAD. IT’S NOT EVEN PAST.”

—Author **WILLIAM FAULKNER**, from his 1951 novel *Requiem for a Nun*.

“We help kids grow. And that’s part of the rush of teaching.”

—**DOMINIC DIRKSEN**, a high school teacher in San Diego County, speaking in an unscripted CTA back-to-school TV ad that began airing statewide on Aug. 31. Watch the ads at cta.org/mediacenter.

“There are frequent stories about public school teachers who are leaving the profession or taking early retirement because of the toll of working in a ‘test and punish’ environment. A November 2014 National Education Association survey reported that nearly 50 percent of all teachers are considering leaving due to standardized testing.”

—*Washington Post* reporter **VALERIE STRAUSS**, in her Aug. 24 Answer Sheet education blog about how to halt the teacher shortage hitting many states, including California.

“Why not allow total voucherization? Nevada is moving in this direction.”

—GOP presidential hopeful **JEB BUSH**, at an Aug. 19 New Hampshire education summit meeting of Republican presidential candidates. The highly controversial Nevada voucher law destabilizes public schools by allowing richer students to use their taxpayer-funded vouchers to attend private schools.

“Now that the governor has a rainy day fund, it’s somewhat redundant to have a backup fund for your backup fund.”

—**CHRIS PROKOP**, president of the Cajon Valley Education Association, quoted in an Aug. 19 *San Diego Union-Tribune* story about a new bill backed by school boards and opposed by CTA. The bill would allow school districts to hoard public money in larger reserves than allowed in voter-approved Proposition 2.

67%

Percentage of public school parents nationwide who think there is too much emphasis on standardized testing in public schools, according to the 47th annual PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, released in August.

63%

Percentage of public school parents polled who oppose including student scores from standardized tests as part of teacher evaluations, in the same poll.

82,000

Number of California school-related jobs lost during the recession from 2008 to 2012, as reported in an Aug. 9 *New York Times* teacher shortage story that focused on the Golden State.

\$490

Average amount teachers spent of their own money last school year on classroom supplies, according to a survey, released in July, of 536 K-12 educators in the U.S., conducted by Agile Education Marketing. (Read members’ comments about classroom spending on page 10.)

3.3

Hours of television watched each day by the average U.S. kindergartner, cited in “Harper’s Index” in the August *Harper’s Magazine*.

YOUR WHOLE LIFE

Tips and trends for a smarter, healthier you



Feet hurt? Keep barking dogs at bay

Most educators know good posture and proper footwear can ease foot pain and strain. But you still need to move around — even while standing — to ward off circulation issues, joint damage and other chronic diseases. How to feel good all day long:

- 1. SUPPORT YOUR FEET.** Shoes that wear like sneakers with added support and cushioning are your best bet. Brands to try: Aetrex, Born, Dansko, Earthies, Jambu, Merrell, Naot, New Balance and Sofft.
- 2. STAND UP STRAIGHT.** The right footwear keeps most of the weight of the body in your heels, so your joints stack directly on top of one another and your bones support body weight instead of soft tissue.
- 3. THROW YOUR WEIGHT AROUND.** Sit down, stretch, move — don't stand or sit in the same position for hours at a time.
- 4. USE PROPS.** A foam roller, tennis ball and even a bakery rolling pin can help ease pressure spots and "roll out" muscles in between classes.
- 5. TAKE RECESS.** Run on the blacktop, walk the long way to the restroom, get outside for five minutes, or take time to breathe deeply from your diaphragm.

For more, see neamb.com

STRETCH IT

These stretches relieve postural pain in a snap:

TOP OF THE FOOT:

Standing, shift the weight to one foot and extend the hip of the stretching leg behind the body, placing the top of the foot and toes on to the floor.

CALF:

Use a rolled-up towel, the low side of a yoga block, or any prop of similar height. Step the ball of the foot onto the prop, leaving the heel on the floor. (The stretching leg should be straight, not locked.)

HEADS-UP ON RETIREMENT

A **403(B) PLAN** is a voluntary defined contribution retirement plan for employees of public schools. It's similar to a 401(k) plan in the private sector, and lets you supplement your CalSTRS or CalPERS defined benefit plan, or pension.

At the beginning of the school year, 403(b) representatives and vendors market heavily to educators. But don't feel pressured to make a quick decision, especially since some products carry high fees and surrender charges. Instead, visit CTAinvest.org for tools to get informed, estimate your retirement benefit, compare products and more.

STRESS LESS

EDUCATORS MAY EXPERIENCE stress for any number of reasons, both on and off the job. It's important to recognize how you react to stress and learn how to manage it. Chronic stress can contribute to or cause many serious health problems, including hypertension, stroke, ulcers and more.

Signs of stress include headaches, muscle tension, neck or back pain; upset stomach; chest pains; difficulty sleeping; fatigue; loss of appetite or overeating; anxiety; and irritability. Some tips to manage stress:

- Be physically active — even 30 minutes a day of gentle walking
- Eat healthy
- Take breaks
- Avoid overusing alcohol or other drugs
- Practice relaxation exercises, deep breathing or meditation
- Take time for yourself
- Talk to family and friends for emotional support
- Work with your local association and colleagues to change work conditions that cause stress. For strategies, see neahealthyfutures.org

Care for your pet

YOU THINK OF FIDO and Fluffy as part of the family, and want their lives to be long, happy and healthy. Pet health insurance helps make this possible by reimbursing you on veterinary costs to diagnose and treat your pets for covered illnesses and accidents — which can sometimes be so expensive that covering costs out of pocket is difficult. There are also wellness plans that help pay for routine care like checkups, vaccines and dental cleanings. Do your research before buying, and be sure to look into NEA's Pet Insurance Program at neamb.com.



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By Mike Myslinski

When in doubt, “air” on the side of caution.

If teachers, students and all public school employees followed some basic guidelines to protect against mold, stagnant classroom air, and other indoor air quality hazards, they could all breathe a little easier, experts and studies conclude.

As another school year begins, the need for teachers to remain vigilant about these ongoing hazards is critical, as student asthma rates have soared and classrooms can fester with asthma “triggers” like dust mites. About 16 percent of California children ages 5-17 have been diagnosed with asthma, which is a leading cause of school absenteeism, according to the California Department of Education. In recent years, CTA focused on these and other classroom health issues as part of a project promoting teachers being proactive about air quality at work.

But hazards persist. New red flags were raised by

a 2013 study, the largest of its kind, that found a majority of 162 elementary classrooms in three California school districts failed to meet minimum state health standards for ventilating classrooms. The names of the districts were kept secret, but they were located in the Bay Area, the Central Valley, and a southern coastal area.

Classroom windows were rarely opened to let in outdoor fresh air, and portable classroom ventilation rates were worst of all, according to the two-year study by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. The study estimated that fixing the ventilation rates would cost about



AIR QUALITY RESOURCES

Tools for Schools Action Kit:

The free indoor air quality EPA teacher toolkit can be downloaded at www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/actionkit.html. California teachers can request a limited number of free hard copies of the kit from Shelly Rosenblum, Radiation & Indoor Environments Teams, U.S. EPA / AIR-6, 75 Hawthorne St., San Francisco, CA 94105 (phone: 415-947-4193).

CDE Guide for Educators:

The California Department of Education indoor air quality guide for educators is at cde.ca.gov/ls/fa/sf/iaq.asp.

Free Lesson Plans:

Numerous free lesson plans on environmental topics such as mold dangers, school pollution prevention, insect hazards, acid rain, global warming, and other timely issues are offered at this EPA link: epa.gov/students/teachers.html.

\$4 million, but that doing so would “increase attendance-linked funding to schools by \$33 million annually.”

The good news is that educators can find a free tool-kit assembled by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with classroom checklists, videos and other tools online (see sidebar).

The EPA Tools for Schools Action Kit intrigues educator Linda Chan, who chairs the CTA State Council School Safety/School Management Committee. She wants the kit shared with California teachers statewide. Clean air is vital to student learning, says Chan, Mt. San Antonio College Faculty Association.

“I want to get this out to all of our teachers — I believe in empowering our instructors,” Chan says. “If you’re not getting oxygen to the brain, the brain is not functioning properly and proper learning cannot take place.”

The EPA agrees, and says all school employees need to work together on air quality. “Everyone has a role to play in assuring good indoor air quality,” says Shelly Rosenblum, on the radiation and indoor environments team at the federal EPA offices in San Francisco.

“Maintenance staff need to make sure that building structures remain dry and that all mechanical ventilation systems are in good working order, bringing in outside air and exhausting classroom air,” Rosenblum says. “Teachers need to understand their contribution as well, learning about indoor sources of air pollution like deodorizers, air fresheners, and old couches and pillows.”

He says custodial services need to purchase the least toxic cleaning supplies and use them in accordance with manufacturers’ directions. Students should be considerate of their fellow students and use unscented personal care products, Rosenblum recommends. Providing the least toxic approach to pest control is also key.

School districts looking for examples of proactive districts might visit the 4,500-student Oak Park Unified School District in Ventura County. It won the California Department of Public Health’s 2012 Achievements in Respiratory Health Award and other recognition, including the Green Ribbon Schools District Sustainability Award from the U.S. Department of Education in 2013.

Among many remedies, the Oak Park district uses quality carpets that reduce allergens, sustainable furniture with less glue, and tinted classroom windows instead of dust-gathering blinds, and installed new air conditioning units, says Julie Suarez, director of business operations.

“We also get the ventilation ducting cleaned regularly,” she says. “We get them all clean to keep the air nice and clean.” ■



Linda Chan

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*National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Digest of Education Statistics, 2011.

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Perspectives

INSIDE:

- 22** Point/Counterpoint:
Should Ethnic Studies
Be Required?
- 23** Member Spotlight:
Maureen Rymer



High schoolers in Los Angeles show their support for ethnic studies outside of LAUSD headquarters. Educators debate whether it should be a requirement or an elective, **page 22**.

PHOTO CREDIT: Sean C. Abajian



Should ethnic studies courses be required?

Teresa Worley Strombotne Yes. Our schools and our world are increasingly diverse. Well-designed ethnic studies courses could promote understanding and positive communication among diverse ethnic groups at our schools.

Martha Infante Events in Charlotte and Ferguson, and comments by presidential candidates show ethnic studies is not only needed, but needed direly. We waste so much money on iPads, bad software, and lawsuit settlements, when we could be spending that money on quality arts, language and ethnic studies courses. Let's not relegate ethnic studies to an elective class. It's important enough to [be] a condition for graduation.

Dianne Edwards Does this mean the number of required units to graduate would be increased? Would the class take the place of another requirement? Which ethnicities would be included? It will be interesting to watch how this progresses. I would prefer it be kept as an elective.

Rosalba Adame-Leon Yes, ethnic studies will connect students of color and students that immigrated here to understand and respect culture and develop a sense of self. This should start in middle school where we begin to lose student interest in learning and school, where they join gangs because they find familiar affiliations. Ethnic studies will fill the gap.

Bernadette Weissmann If we are doing our job at the secondary level, ethnic studies should [already] be integrated. We have a World Geography and Cultures class and a Living Skills class freshman year. Honestly — what would you take off the plate? We went with A-G requirements for all students a few years back, and there is barely any room for an elective. One more academic class and I think our dropout/give-up rate would skyrocket.

Michelle Totra No. This course would [be] more effective kept as an elective.

Ethnic studies courses for secondary students are becoming required in some school districts (see story on page 44). CTA supports AB 101, a bill that promotes elective ethnic studies courses across the state. We asked Facebook readers for their thoughts.

Jose Lara of Ethnic Studies Now Coalition was recognized as the 2015 NEA Social Justice Activist of the Year.



Tamie Lutz [We] need more electives and vocational education classes.

Janet Lee No, there are enough required courses as is. Ethnic studies should be integrated. Wasn't it a part of multicultural teaching in our teaching program? [It] can be offered as an elective....With NGSS and Common Core math and English, college expectations for foreign language, CTE, and vocational education — we want to add this too?

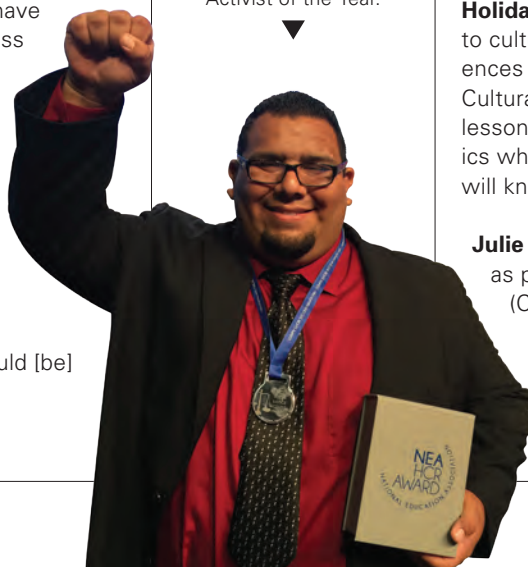
Sandy Deemer Harra Yes, ethnic studies should become a requirement for graduation. The curriculum [should] be carefully thought out by a team of well-trained ethnic studies teachers and reviewed by a panel of college professors to encourage diversity and equity.

Pat Trelinski [Students] should take a class that helps them understand we are all different and need to embrace those differences by learning about each other. It should incorporate zero tolerance on bullying, threatening, etc. It does concern me that so many teachers are being RIF'd for needed subjects and jobs within the schools.

Ramzy Earle Many families are multicultural/multilingual. Exposing students to the truth regarding other cultures will promote better understanding, which in turn leads to a stronger United States (emphasis on "united," as we need to be more united to be the truly strong country we should be).

Holiday Woodward Yes! Ethnic studies leads to cultural literacy, an understanding that differences should be respected in a global society. Cultural literacy was once part of geography lessons at the elementary level. Bring back Civics while you're at it, so that our young people will know what it means to be an American.

Julie Gordon Yes — and integrated as much as possible within every core curriculum! (Coming from the perspective of a 12-year ELA/ELD California HS and then middle school teacher who is first-generation American-born Filipino with mixed Black and Filipino kids.)





In Maureen's words:

I started writing songs... out of complete frustration, because I couldn't get the kids to remember things. When I was a Girl Scout leader we did goofy chant songs. I realized I could write an eight-verse song and they would know everything a high school chemistry student needed to know about atoms. Of course, the first three verses are the most crucial.

My name is Rymer... but my songs don't rhyme very much. I married my high school sweetheart, and his last name is Rymer. He was dating a friend, and she wanted to date somebody else and set me up with him.

My interest in music... goes back to when my parents didn't let us kids listen to the radio and told us to sing together in the car. So we did. We sang rounds, camp songs, church songs, and anything to help the miles go by.

One day I might... sell my songs and make money, but for now I enjoy sharing them with other teachers on campus. They can use a recording if they are too shy to sing it themselves. My students record the songs on their smartphones. I recently had a college student text me because she was tutoring students in chemistry and needed some of my songs.

My advice for other teachers... is find a way to make it stick. Rap it. Make up a rhythm. Get kids to make up their own songs for extra credit. There's also good music out there by other musicians, which I use in my class. Check out songs on YouTube by Michael Offutt or Lynda Jones at Sing-Smart.com to learn chemistry and physics. Have fun with it. Your students will have fun, too.

Teacher has singing down to a science

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin Photography by Scott Buschman

At first students feel silly when asked to sing in Maureen Rymer's chemistry class at Sweetwater High School in National City. But they soon discover the answers to the test stay in their head because of the songs they've memorized. So they happily break into song the next time they are asked. And the next. Years later, when former students visit, they'll sing the "Grams to Moles" song, which they still know by heart (see sidebar; hear Rymer sing it at cta.org/gramstomoles).

The Sweetwater Education Association member has taught physics and chemistry for 32 years and won many awards, including Sweetwater Union High School District's Teacher of the Year and GATE (Gifted and Talented Education) Teacher of the Year. She tutors after school and on Saturdays and sponsors a science club, which took students to Utah in 2012 for a solar eclipse. She has presented at the CUE (Computer Using Educators) conference and the National Science Teachers Association.

But mostly, Rymer is known for being in tune with her students and singing science songs she's written, accompanied by her guitar. She says music has given her students higher test scores, as well as provided harmony in the classroom.

"Grams to Moles"

*Grams to moles you divide
By the molar mass.
Grams to moles you divide
By the molar mass from the table.*

*Atoms to moles you divide
Formula units to moles you divide
Molecules to moles you divide
By Avogadro's number
Boom boom boom six point oh two two times 10 to the 23rd.*



TECH SUPPORT

Teachers at George McParland School in Manteca meet in the morning for coffee and professional development.

Or are teachers left to their own devices?

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin
Photography by Scott Buschman



In Manteca, technological professional development is served “à la carte” to teachers first thing in the morning with a cup of coffee and pastries.

In Beverly Hills High School, teachers schmooze during “Appy Hour” to share refreshments and the latest tech tips.

And in other districts, teachers remain hungry for tech training. For example, San Marcos Unified School District invested in new electronic devices, but some staffers aren’t quite sure how to incorporate them into their classrooms.

As education evolves, some school sites offer professional development that’s teacher-driven, innovative and enjoyable. In others, it may be one-size-fits-all, inadequate or nonexistent.

The issue has taken on a new urgency, especially for those teaching core subjects, now that computers

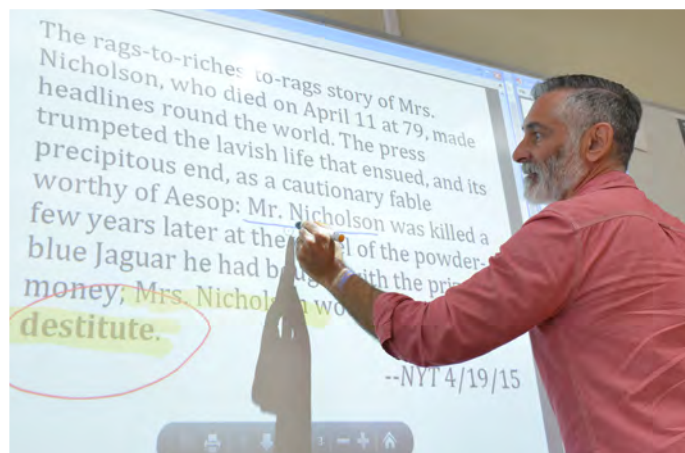
are used for standardized tests and tied to Common Core implementation.

Half of pre-K–12 teachers nationwide in a 2013 PBS LearningMedia survey said they are “comfortable” experimenting with new technology, while 38 percent agreed with the statement: “I like new technology, but wish I had more direction on how to use it.”

Here are ways some educators are being helped to implement technology into teaching, while others are hindered and sometimes left to their own devices.



◀ **Ken Johnson** cheers with students Angelina Anaya and Alexandra Carmona at George McParland School as the district sets a world record in online learning platform Kahoot.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WITH PANACHE IN 90210

When Apple TV and wireless, interactive short-throw projectors arrived in some Beverly Hills High classrooms, not everyone understood how the fancy equipment could improve teaching and learning.

So Steven Rubenstein, an AP literature teacher who also serves as the district's only "tech TOSA" (teacher on special assignment), organized an "Appy Hour" on early dismissal days when educators could observe peer demonstrations in one another's classrooms and learn new strategies.

"We had drinks and food, and mingled," recalls Rubenstein, Beverly Hills Education Association. "Some teachers are terrified of technology and worry, 'What if something goes wrong?' The fear of chaos in the classroom and wasted instructional time is pretty powerful, so the idea was to provide a setting that was relaxing

and educational where they could pick up new ideas for their classrooms."

Julie Goler, who teaches across the hallway, loved it.

"It was like having a Genius Bar at our own school," she raves, comparing it to the assistance offered in Apple Stores. "I used to think of myself as not being very techy, but I don't anymore. This helped me step up my game and challenge myself." Her students now use Google Docs for writing and editing. She uses Facebook to improve student engagement and communication, and her online tests in Juno provide instant feedback. To stay organized and record student grades, she uses Jupiter.

Staff share ideas schoolwide on Google Dashboard. In recent posts, a math teacher describes how Quizlet helps students with practice tests, games and exercises; a ceramics teacher uses Instagram for pottery previews; and a math teacher asks students to take photos, input them into a graphic calculator app, and create quadratic functions to match the photo outline.

▲
Beverly Hills High School's **Steven Rubenstein** organized an "Appy Hour" for colleagues to learn new tech tools and strategies.



Marla Rosenthal, a third-grade teacher in San Marcos School District, is also the site's lead technology teacher.

A one-day Technology Conference on campus was unlike any professional development teachers had ever experienced. They were asked in advance what they needed and could pick their own workshops. Teachers and professionals from Google conducted sessions at the event, which had a keynote speaker from Apple.

Students also are a wonderful resource in helping faculty become comfortable with technology.

"I loved helping at the conference," says Daniel Newman, member of the Student Tech Squad. "Even In the classroom, students can play a role in helping teachers. It comes really easy to us — and makes us feel good."

TECH TRAINING GOES A LA CARTE IN MANTECA

"Prezi is like PowerPoint on steroids," explains Ken Johnson to colleagues gathered in the George McParland School library. It's 45 minutes before school starts, but staff have gathered for "tech talk," lured by coffee and pastries and the chance to learn something new. After the "Cup O Joe" carts were rolled out last year, teachers, classified staff and administrators began pouring in for early morning training collaboration sessions.

"I love it," says Kathy Cambra, digital support technician for the district. "Where else can you get coffee and knowledge in one fell swoop?"

Attendees view the screen connected wirelessly to Johnson's laptop, as he demonstrates snazzy features of Prezi (for creating presentations) and Animoto (for creating video slideshows from photos, video clips and music). Lastly, he demonstrates how to post on YouTube.

Students also love learning about these tools, shares Johnson, Manteca Educators Association president. Students benefit from engaging, hands-on lessons when technology is incorporated into curriculum.



Student morale soared after the district set the world record for largest Global Classroom Kahoot. More than 2,000 players in 127 classrooms and 30 schools participated in the real-time online quiz. (Kahoot is an educational, game-based platform where participants can pose questions to an unlimited number of "players.") Students would never have experienced this historic event if teachers weren't comfortable using technology.

The shift started two years ago with the Going Digital Project. MEA leadership insisted on being involved from the beginning, says Johnson, to ensure the district didn't impose one-size-fits-all professional development.

HOW TO REBOOT YOUR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Roll out short professional development sessions with a "coffee cart" stocked with beverages and snacks.
- Organize an expo-style tech conference, with breakout sessions, guest speakers, food and prizes.
- Hold an Appy Hour for sharing strategies.
- Sponsor a districtwide Twitter chat.
- Bargain to ensure adequate compensation and time for collaboration and lesson planning.



WAITING FOR UPGRADES



Does your school offer quality professional development for staff to become tech-savvy?

The *Educator* received lots of responses to this Facebook question. Some say yes (kudos to San Juan Unified and Palo Alto), but many say no. Among the responses:

"There's a ton of demand in our system, but Fresno Unified has failed to put anything useful together," laments Adam Ebrahim, Fresno Teachers Association, who has been highly involved with helping colleagues transition to Common Core.

"The district probably thinks so," says Laura Nance, Chatom Union Educators Association. "The reality is no. I was given a cart with 36 Asus T100 tablets at the end of last year and no training and expected to begin using them ASAP. Luckily, I am fairly tech-savvy. My new laptop at home had Windows 8 on it. Otherwise, I would've been lost for a while."

When support is available, staff may be told to learn on their own time and their own dime. Suzi Tornberg, Modesto Teachers Association, explains, "It's very occasionally after school on a volunteer basis."

San Marcos Unified School District invested in Chromebook computers, but provided minimal support for educators trying to incorporate them into curriculum.

"There were good intentions, but the district was too focused on buying devices without enough focus on how to train people what to do with them once they

got them," explains Marla Rosenthal, a third-grade teacher at Discovery Elementary School.

Rosenthal, the site's lead technology teacher, is a member of CTA's Region IV cohort for teacher leadership, focusing on technology and teacher empowerment. She belongs to her district's workload committee, and says one of the most pressing issues is making time for training.

"Teachers feel overwhelmed learning how to use new equipment at the same time they are converting to new standards and a new standardized test," says Rosenthal, San Marcos Educators Association. "As a result, devices are underutilized. There is a huge disconnect between the new standards and what kids are expected to do with technology. Teachers who struggle with their new devices are embarrassed to admit it to others."

She believes the challenges facing San Marcos reflect what districts are facing everywhere.

"Students are using technology day in and day out in games and texting. If we don't show them how to incorporate it into the classroom, they'll be shortchanged when they go out into the workforce."

To ensure that teachers are compensated fairly for time and training, profes-

sional development should be bargained whenever possible, advises Sharlene Paxton, lead technology coach, Sierra Sands Unified School District.

"In my district, teacher collaboration time is not uniformly applied across all the elementary schools, and there is no time in high schools dedicated to collaboration," says Paxton, Desert Area Teachers Association. "Hopefully, it will be bargained into our new contract."

Teachers in her district receive a stipend for attending after-school workshops, but attendance is low. For many it's a financial issue; child care costs more than the stipend.

The district, located in the Mojave Desert, received a \$2 million federal grant to integrate technology, math and literacy in the classroom, and has invested in Chromebooks, with a goal of one-to-one distribution.

"It's a lot to put on the plate of teachers," says Paxton. "What educators need can be answered in one word — time. We need time for training, time for professional development, time for learning, and time to create innovative lessons. We need time to experiment and play with new technology. Until schools make time for adequate training, it will continue to be a challenge for teachers to fully integrate technology into the classroom."



Sharlene Paxton

Microsoft Surface Pro 2 devices (which can be used as tablets or laptops) were given to teachers after they attended three hours of training led by a Microsoft expert. They were asked to complete nine additional hours of training either in person or online, based on their individual needs. Unlike some districts, Manteca teachers are paid for their time and can telecommute from home for training.

Soon, Microsoft trainers were replaced with two teacher "tech champions" at each school.

"Teachers are the real experts, and they know best what makes sense and what tools and resources we need," explains Johnson.

Weekly webinars are held on a multitude of topics. The district's Monday night Twitter chat at [@prbmttechchat](https://twitter.com/prbmttechchat) (PRBM means "proud to be Manteca") has become popular with teachers, who receive credit for participating. Guests from tech companies sometimes join in.



A districtwide tech conference was held during an in-service day with breakout sessions, an expo hall, food, prizes, and a “collaboration space” for sharing experiences and watching homemade instructional videos.

For 20-year classroom veteran Marissa Stolarik, the support has been phenomenal.

“I’m not tech-savvy. If I hadn’t gotten this kind of support, I wouldn’t have jumped in,” confides the second- and third-grade combination class teacher. “But now I’m using technology in my classroom. We have eliminated paper. Students have learned how to write on PDFs.”

Manteca students use computers for research, writing, blogging, solving math problems, creating brochures and project-based learning. Special education teacher Linda Cochran marvels that many of her students dislike working from books, but eagerly perform assignments on their tablets.

“We’ve basically changed our whole culture here,” says Johnson. “Staff is working together as a team. A lot of people were resistant at first, but more are becoming open to new ways of doing things.”

‘WIN-WIN’ IN PALM SPRINGS

In Palm Springs, educators have stepped up their game. Literally.

“Yes, we have definitely ‘gamified’ our training,” says Eduardo Rivera, Palm Springs Teachers Association, a technology TOSA and math teacher who trains teachers in using Google products and Web 2.0 tools to create a Web presence.

Rivera and fellow TOSAs Karen Foerch and Bhavini Patel wanted colleagues to become comfortable with Chromebooks (computers running Google’s Chrome operating system) — and avoid one-size-fits-all training.

So in addition to offering a two-day workshop on the basics, the TOSA team developed a website called Chrome Warrior, which offers video lessons and links to other online trainings (check it out at chromewarrior.net).

The site has sparked friendly competition. Participants log in to see who’s made it to “top warriors” and “top weekly warriors” after completing challenges. Prizes include new software.

“Teachers monitor their progress for different missions we’ve created,”



▲
Brody
Wonsley and
Keaton Smith
in **Marla
Rosenthal’s**
class.

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- **Choose one tool, app or website** to experiment and play with. Check out videos about it on YouTube. Use it in class, in lesson design, with students and other teachers.
- **Find a “techie” teacher and ask them to share their ideas.** Carve out time, even 15 minutes a week, to try out new tech tools with a few colleagues. A small group can pool knowledge and gain expertise more quickly than one teacher working in isolation.
- **Don’t feel like you have to know everything** before you start using a new technology with your students. They’ll learn quickly and teach you. Be comfortable showing them that you’re a learner too.
- **Seek out training opportunities.** Attend local and regional tech conferences, such as an Edcamp or a CUE Conference. Start a Twitter account and follow other techies.



Eduardo Rivera

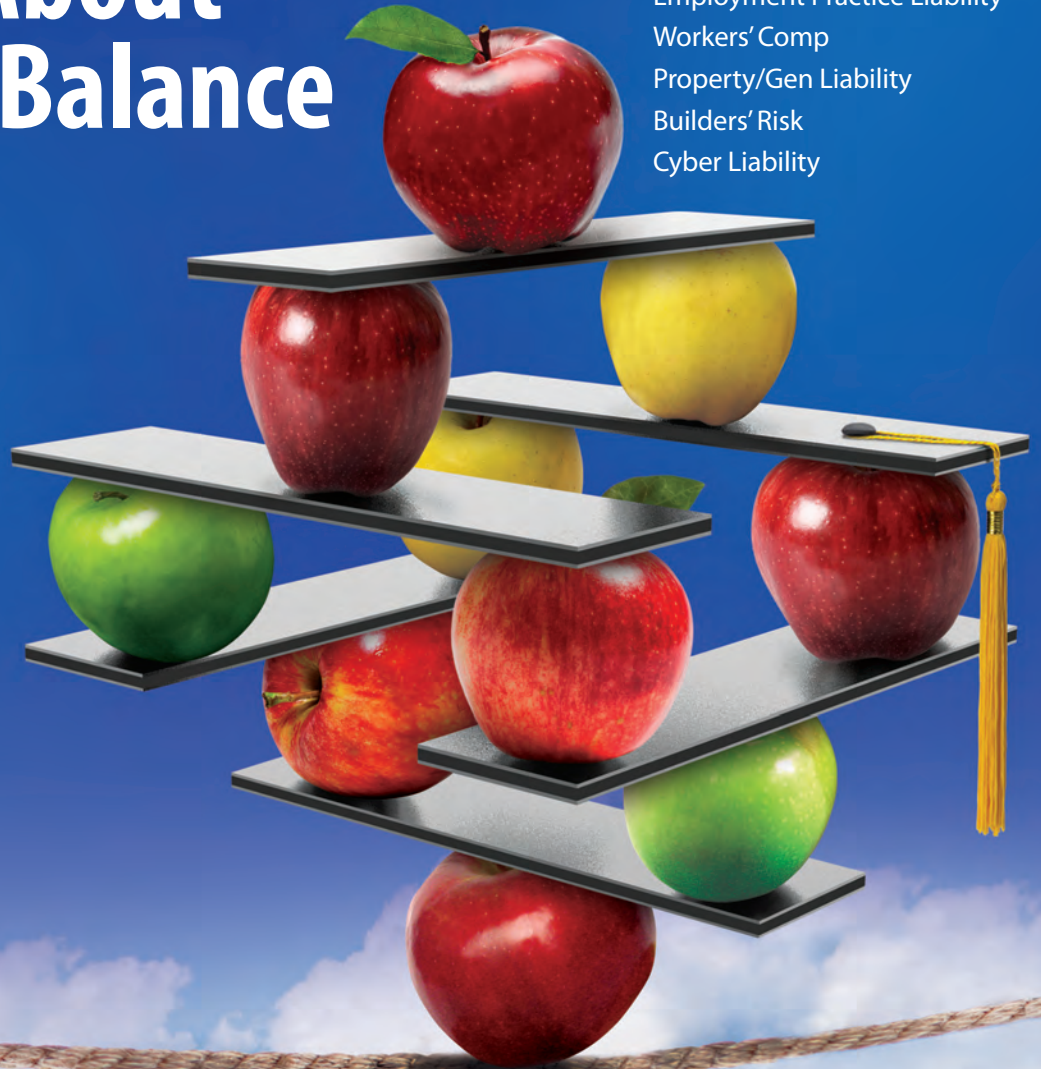
says Rivera. “These missions are mini-professional development lessons. Gradually they are becoming more autonomous, sharing with each other and trying new things on their own. We’re not there yet, but it’s a start.” ■

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EDUCATORS HELP STUDENTS COPE WITH INCREASED ANXIETY

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin
Photography by Scott Buschman

Alicia Chavez can tell when she is about to suffer an anxiety attack at school. Her hands get sweaty. Her heart starts racing. Her stomach and head begin to hurt. She can't concentrate and feels a need to go outside and take deep breaths.

Chavez, a junior at Apollo High School in San Jose, feels panicky around groups of people and worries they are judging her. She fears being bullied by peers about her appearance. She worries about her future and whether she will be successful in life.

"Anxiety is a big problem for me," admits Chavez, who says it has caused her to miss lots of school.

Chavez is not unusual. About 8 percent of American teens suffer from some sort of anxiety disorder, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. CTA members agree that more students — especially girls — are anxious these days. It's happening to students at younger ages and across all socioeconomic levels. The causes may include bullying, broken homes, social media, and trying to navigate personal relationships. Because getting into college is much more competitive than in years past, some students take honors and AP classes that are challenging and stressful.

When Chavez feels anxiety strike, she visits the Student Support Services office. She seeks out Jeanine Davis, a school social worker.

"Miss Jeanine tries to figure out what's causing my anxiety and helps me relax a little bit," says Chavez. "It's good to have someone to talk to."



◀ **Jeanine Davis**, social worker at Apollo High School in San Jose, talks with student Alicia Chavez in her office.

ANXIETY IS ON THE RISE

Davis, who has worked for 20 years in a counseling capacity within schools, says there has been a noticeable increase in anxiety among teens. Her office serves students at Apollo High School, an alternative campus Chavez attends, as well as the adjoining traditional Overfelt High School.

“Ten years ago I would rarely have students coming in complaining of symptoms of anxiety,” says Davis. “But now it’s a daily occurrence.”

Others have also noticed the trend.

“When I first began my career, student anxiety wasn’t something I came across often,” says Shannon Abono, Liberty Education Association, a counselor at Liberty High School in Brentwood. “But in the last seven years, anxiety levels have spiked.”

Due to anxiety, she says, many students cannot succeed in regular school and end up attending alternative schools for at-risk youth. “I am not alone in thinking this. The subject is debated and discussed with my co-workers and colleagues more and more.”

Anxiety disorders have resulted in more students are being placed on 504 and IEP plans, says Abono. (Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requires the needs of students with disabilities be met as adequately as the needs of the nondisabled. An individualized education program, IEP, is required for every student in special education.)

“They usually start with a complaint of a physical ailment such as a stomach or headache,” says Karen Cloutman, a school nurse for San Diego Unified School District. “When the complaint is further investigated, you find out there are other issues such as

‘problems at home’ or ‘lack of sleep.’ Many will never use the word ‘anxiety,’ but their body language tells you they are anxious.”

These students need a safe place to go, says Cloutman, San Diego Education Association (SDEA). Unlike adults, they can’t just get up and take a break during the day if they are feeling anxious. “We allow them some time in the health office to calm down before they are sent back to class. Our goal is to make them feel comfortable so they can learn.”

Sometimes a nurse calls parents, only to learn that the student has already been diagnosed with



Shannon Abono

an anxiety disorder, she relates. But the parents may not have notified the school to avoid their child being “labeled.” Other parents suspect something is wrong with their child, but lack the resources to have them evaluated.

Kristin Makena, senior school psychologist for San Diego Unified School District, finds the trend of rising anxiety among students to be alarming.

“We’re seeing a lot of anxiety disorders starting early on in kindergarten right up through high school,” says Makena, who is also an SDEA member. “It’s a concern that needs to be addressed in the schools.”

The problem is also increasing at the college level, says Heather Webster-Henry, a marriage and family therapist at CSU San Bernardino.

“When I first started here, I saw a lot more depression, but that has switched to anxiety,” says the California Faculty Association member, who works in the university’s THRIVE program to promote mental health.

The center holds an Overcoming Anxiety group for students who meet regularly, says Webster-Henry, who defines anxiety as “being self-conscious, or feeling a sense of unworthiness, or having a sense of something that inhibits them from engaging other people and taking risks.” ➔

**“IN THE
LAST SEVEN
YEARS,
ANXIETY
LEVELS
HAVE
SPIKED.”**

SHANNON ABONO

WHAT DOES ANXIETY LOOK LIKE?

In elementary school children, stress may cause nightmares and separation anxiety from parents, says Makena. They may not be able to articulate why they have excessive worries. Some stop speaking at school, displaying disorders such as “selective mutism,” or miss school because their anxiety symptoms cause them to feel physically ill. When they fall behind academically, it creates anxiety about catching up.

Teens may vocalize their feelings and frequently act out. Some self-mutilate to calm themselves,

She says others mistakenly think she can “just snap out of it” and don’t realize how debilitating anxiety can be.

“They think I’m being moody or difficult, but it’s totally overwhelming. I’m not able to function.”

Anxiety doesn’t affect everyone exactly the same way, says Abono. One former student, Mikayla Kamalakis, tried to hide her anxiety and internalized her feelings.

“I didn’t want my friends to know, because I felt weird and different,” she says. She stopped eating, lost 30 pounds, and was constantly exhausted and miserable. On one occasion, she couldn’t breathe and passed out. Medication and counseling have helped.

Another student, Tianna Williams, displayed anger and frustration that got her into trouble at school. One panic attack was so severe she went to the hospital.

Both girls say that without Abono’s support they would not have been able to stay on track to graduate. Kamalakis graduated in 2013, and Williams is on track to graduate this year. And while they may display different symptoms, both agree that much of what is causing so much distress these days for teens is social media.



▲
Heather Webster-Henry, marriage and family therapist at CSU San Bernardino, sees a lot of anxiety related to social media.

or self-medicate with drugs or alcohol. Makena says symptoms may include fear, inability to concentrate, irritability, sleep disturbances and absenteeism.

Anxiety may lead to more serious problems such as depression and suicidal behavior, says Davis. “Each year more students are hospitalized and receiving psychotropic medication.”

A high school student Davis works with who wishes to remain anonymous takes medication for social anxiety, but it makes her drowsy at school. She finds it difficult to work in peer groups, which has become the new style under Common Core. Exacerbating her anxiety is rejection by family members after she came out as gay.

HIGH TECH CAN EQUAL HIGH ANXIETY

“There’s a lot of drama in high school,” says Williams. “There will be something on social media about you, and you think, ‘What did I do?’ There’s so much bullying.”

Rumors spread like wildfire, agrees Kamalakis.

“Information spreads so fast, there could be a gazillion rumors about me that aren’t true. I told someone something in confidence, and they screenshotted it, and people pointed and laughed. They forgot I’m human.”

School staff try to keep on top of online bullying, but it can be challenging to prove where it started or that it actually happened at school, says Abono.

Other facets of technology can also contribute to anxiety.

“At CSU San Bernardino, students talk about having a sense that they don’t fit in,” says Webster-Henry. “There’s a little of the ‘celebrity complex’ where certain people worry they aren’t being included in certain events when they see others having fun on Facebook — or they worry they are not getting enough ‘likes.’”

Today’s students may be more comfortable with online communication and find themselves experiencing social anxiety when they must communicate verbally, she adds.

“They don’t know how to navigate introductions and misread body language and facial expressions. They don’t know how to connect with people, make friends, or share things they are experiencing appropriately. Typically, people with anxiety are overwhelmed, feel that everything in life is wrong, and can’t put things in perspective. I’m seeing lots of social anxiety.”

HOW CAN EDUCATORS HELP?

When a student is experiencing extreme anxiety, counselors, nurses, psychologists and social workers may be the first responders. The challenge is to help students calm down

FIVE TIPS TO HELP STUDENTS DECOMPRESS

- Take deep breaths.
- Take a three- to five-minute walk.
- Offer a positive affirmation, such as “This feeling will pass.”
- Make a “grateful list” of things that are positive and good.
- Focus in the present rather than the past or future, by concentrating on the five senses, smelling, feeling, hearing, seeing and tasting.

Source: Heather Webster-Henry, California Faculty Association, CSU San Bernardino



◀ Student Jazmin Garcia strikes a meditative pose at CSU San Bernardino.

and recognize their symptoms before anxiety turns into a full-blown panic attack, and create a safe environment where students can discuss issues. We asked the experts for their advice.

It is important for a doctor to rule out dangerous health conditions that can mimic anxiety, if there are symptoms such as chest pain, rapid heartbeat and difficulty breathing, says Cloutman, the school nurse.

Some campuses offer yoga classes and meditation exercises to help students release tension. “We offer mindfulness and meditation to help CSU San Bernardino students,” says Webster-Henry. “It’s a set of skills about being in the present moment rather than being in the future with the unknown — or the past, where there may be regret. We remind students they have no control over the past or the future.”



Kristin Makena

Webster-Henry says it is important to “normalize” anxious students’ feelings as being within the human experience and remind them they are not crazy. “Compassion is the biggest word we like to use. They may be going through more than you could ever believe, and they will just tell you what’s on the surface.”

Makena, the school psychologist, urges educators to refer students to a mental health professional if they think anxiety is holding them back from being successful. “Talk to them about their concerns,” she says. “Help them develop social supports. Praise their efforts. Emphasize exercise and good sleep, and teach relaxation techniques, such as deep breathing. Help students with organization and practice tasks. Develop small scripts of what to do and say in difficult situations. Teach optimism through positive self-talk.”

Education is key in understanding the problem, says Abono, the school

counselor. “Learn how anxiety and depression manifests in adolescents. Then you can educate parents and help them understand their kids are not ‘faking it’ or trying to be maliciously manipulative. Because no, often it isn’t just hormones.”

Abono says it’s important to communicate students’ individual needs to pertinent staff such as other teachers, the health clerk, secretaries and the school nurse, as well as parents.

Teachers should be on the lookout for clues. For example, a student who regularly does homework, participates in class and swears they have studied for a test, only to consistently fail tests and exams, may suffer from test-taking anxiety.

“If you know one of your students suffers from anxiety, consider possibly chunking out material in small pieces rather than one huge assignment,” Abono suggests. “Breaking things down for students with anxiety is imperative for their academic success.”

To prevent anxiety from triggering a panic attack, sometimes students must be given space. “Students with anxiety are terrified they will have a panic attack in front of others, which can include passing out from hyperventilation, crying hysterically, throwing up, or lashing out in anger verbally or physically,” Abono explains. “In an effort to prevent these things from happening in front of others, an anxious student may inexplicably get up in the middle of class and leave without permission. This is not defiance. This is a student who feels so out of control they are left with no other options.”

Anxiety, she adds, isn’t something that goes away. Usually it must be managed for a lifetime.

Chavez, the San Jose student coping with anxiety, also has some advice for educators.

“If I have to step outside, please let me step outside. Let me sit next to the door or window so I can breathe and not feel so trapped. Don’t make a fuss about me or make me the center of attention. Please understand that instead of more pressure, sometimes I just need to calm down and take a deep breath.” ■



Karen Cloutman



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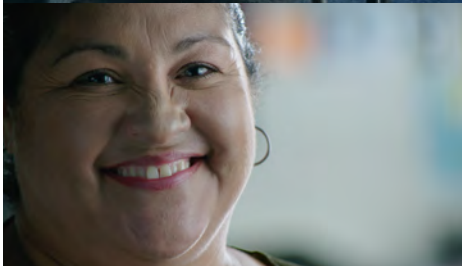
INSIDE:

36 Legislative Update

38 Meet Assembly Member
Tony Thurmond

39 Bargaining Roundup

40 "I Got It!" New CTA
Media Campaign



Educators cherish the "I got it!" moment when students learn — and CTA captures their joy in a new ad campaign, **page 40**.



Legislative Update

By Len Feldman

Charter schools

As the *Educator* went to press, the Legislature was about a week from its adjournment for the year, and a number of important CTA bills were still pending action.

Among them is a package of co-sponsored bills that aim to increase accessibility, transparency and accountability at the state's public charter schools. Taken together, SB 322 by Sen. Mark Leno (D-San Francisco), AB 787 by Assembly Member Roger Hernández (D-West Covina), SB 329 by Sen. Tony Mendoza (D-Artesia), and AB 709 by Assembly Member Mike Gipson (D-Carson) will:

- Ensure unbiased access to charter schools for all students regardless of ethnic or economic background or disabilities.
- Require charter schools to comply with open meeting and good government statutes.
- Ensure that charter school employees can continue to unionize under the Educational Employment Relations Act (EERA), also called the Rodda Act.
- Prohibit charter schools from being run as for-profit entities.

AB 787 is expected to be sent to the governor to sign. The other three bills remain in the Legislature and will be rolled over to next session.

When bills are sent to the governor in the last days of the legislative year, the law gives the governor 30 days instead of the usual 10 to review and sign or veto them. This year, the governor will have until Oct. 11 to finalize his decisions on the hundreds of bills that are being sent to him in the final days of the session.

Reserve caps

CTA and a coalition of education organizations are fighting a last-ditch effort by school district administrator groups to roll back a provision of law that under certain circumstances caps the amount of money districts can hold in their local reserve accounts.

CTA opposes large district reserves because the stockpiling of funds comes at the expense of students and classroom instruction. During the recent Great Recession, local district reserves — which averaged about 30 percent



of district budgets — were protected while districts decimated student instructional programs and slashed teaching positions.

The larger issue involves transparency and local community accountability. Changes outlined in SB 799 would repeal the caps, which means districts would not have to publicly account for or explain their reserves; they could use reserve funds however they see fit, not necessarily on students' education.

The caps were set on local reserves as part of last year's budget agreement, which also established a Prop. 98 state-wide Rainy Day reserve fund to back up local districts and help them weather economic storms. Having uncapped reserve funds at both the local and state levels is redundant and unnecessary.

Groups supporting SB 799 include the California School Boards Association and the Association of California School Administrators.

Exit exam requirement suspended

Speedy action by Sen. Loni Hancock (D-Oakland), the Legislature, and Gov. Jerry Brown has protected more than 5,000 high school seniors from losing their places in

college admissions, apprenticeship programs, the military, and other postsecondary opportunities that demand high school graduation.

The governor has signed SB 725 by Hancock, which suspends the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) requirement for 2015 and allows otherwise qualified seniors to graduate. Until this bill was enacted, these seniors were unable to receive their diplomas. The Legislature is still considering what to do with the exit exam, which is currently not aligned with the new California standards.

Originally, these students were planning to take the exam this summer, but the California Department of Education canceled the scheduled date in July.

A companion measure, SB 172 by Sen. Carol Liu (D-La Cañada Flintridge), is pending in the Assembly. It would suspend the CAHSEE through the 2016 and 2017 school years.

Protecting workers' legal rights

The Legislature sent Gov. Brown a CTA-supported measure that bars employers from forcing workers to waive

their legal rights as a condition of employment. AB 465 by Assembly Member Roger Hernández (D-West Covina) prohibits employers from forcing workers to sign an arbitration agreement preventing them from exercising their options available under California labor law.

"No worker should be forced to choose between a job and giving up core labor rights and procedures," states Hernández. "Existing labor laws are meaningless if workers are forced to sign away enforcement of those rights. That's exactly what is happening, and AB 465 prohibits this abuse."

The bill does not prevent individuals or chapters from entering into agreements that include binding arbitration.

Women's equality

Women won the right to vote 95 years ago, and Women's Equality Day on Aug. 26 commemorates that victory. This year on that day, Gov. Brown signed a bill that makes it illegal to pay women less than men for doing the same job.

The signing of SB 358 by Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson (D-Santa Barbara) gives California the strongest equal pay law in the United States.

"Equal pay isn't just the right thing for women," says Jackson. "It's the right thing for our economy and for California. And it is long overdue. Families rely on women's income more than ever before. Because of the wage gap, our state and families are missing out on \$33.6 billion a year."

Union Membership Pays Dividends for Women

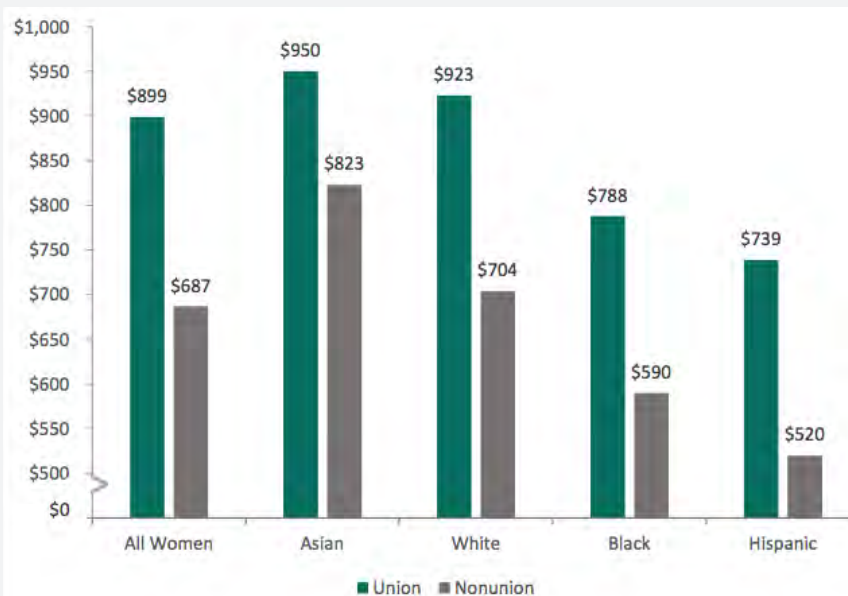
NEARLY A CENTURY after women won the right to vote in the United States, unions are still battling to win full economic equality for women.

A report by the Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) at George Washington University finds that:

- Women who are represented by labor unions earn 30.9 percent more than those working in nonunion jobs.
- Women in labor unions earn 88.7 percent of the wages earned by males, a considerably larger percentage of male earnings than nonunion female workers.
- Union representation provides a wage advantage to women of all major racial and ethnic groups. For instance, union-represented Hispanic women earn 42.1 percent more than their nonunion counterparts.

But these statistics tell only part of the story. Read more about the Union Advantage at the Status of Women website (statusofwomen.data.org).

Median weekly earnings for U.S. full-time wage and salary workers, 2014.



Source: The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) at George Washington University



MEET

ASSEMBLY MEMBER

Tony Thurmond

By Len Feldman

East Bay voters in Assembly District 15 elected Tony Thurmond (D-Richmond) in November 2014. He is a graduate and former student body president of Temple University. He earned M.A. degrees in law and social policy at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. Prior to his election to the Assembly, he led the CEO Youth project, which worked to improve school attendance and reduce dropout rates. In addition to serving as a nonprofit leader, he has been a school board member and city council member.

What did you do before becoming a lawmaker? ➡ For more than 20 years, I ran programs focused on serving foster youth and youth from disadvantaged backgrounds and individuals with developmental disabilities. The programs worked to improve education and economic viability in communities serving low-income people and people of color.

As a council member in Richmond I focused on efforts to reduce community violence, expand job programs for youth and training programs for adults, and promote economic development. As a school board member for the West Contra Costa Unified School District, I launched a districtwide youth commission and led the district's campaign to reduce school suspensions, which resulted in a nearly 30 percent reduction in suspensions.

What led you to run for office? ➡ My social work career helped me see that many of those in our social services systems are often denied a quality education and are largely negatively impacted by poverty, substance issues, violence and disinvestment. I learned early on that one of the best ways to serve people in need is to change the systems that impact those individuals, and thus my desire to serve in elected office arose.

Which teachers had the greatest impact on you? ➡ Thanks to teachers, mentors and family members, I overcame many barriers as a youth — loss of a parent, poverty, etc.

My high school algebra teacher helped me work through my difficulties in learning math. She was patient and never gave up on me. My sixth-grade teacher conducted math and science relays to make learning interesting, and got the entire classroom involved in an activity that is critically important to legislators — public speaking. I would also like to thank my fifth-grade teacher, who every Friday afternoon pushed the desks against the wall and taught a bunch of his students how to dance. He created a fun learning opportunity that helped us explore social development in a safe, structured and supervised environment.

What steps should the Legislature take to help schools succeed? ➡ The Legislature needs first and foremost to provide increased and stable funding sources. Providing the highest-quality education for students should be our top priority, and we should show we value public education by providing more resources for it. We should also improve compensation for those who teach, and we should provide all teachers access to the best professional development and training available.

What are your goals for public education? ➡ My goals are to reduce rates of chronic student absenteeism, to close the achievement gap, and to ensure that every student graduates from high school with the skills needed to go on to college or some other form of postsecondary education.

What advice would you give educators about working with the legislators? ➡ Teachers should invite legislators to visit their classrooms to see firsthand the needs of students and teachers. For the last few years I have enjoyed being a volunteer reader at Read Across America Day in the first-grade classroom of Mr. Robert Ellis at Washington Elementary School in Richmond. Building strong, lasting relationships with legislators is extremely important. A healthy relationship with educators will help legislators develop comprehensive and effective legislation.

Bargaining Roundup

See details of these stories at
cta.org/bargainingupdates

TROUBLE IN PARADISE

Teachers Association of Paradise (TAP) members, concerned that students are being shortchanged by the loss of educators, are taking their worries to parents.

"Like you, we care about our kids and about this community," says a flier that TAP distributed to parents. "We know the best way to improve is to put a quality teacher in the classroom. Help us prevent quality teachers from leaving Paradise."

TAP says teachers must be paid a competitive salary. Since last June, Paradise students have lost 34 teachers. Twenty-four went to neighboring districts for better pay and more respectful working conditions, and 10 retired, many saying they left for the same reasons.

The outgoing superintendent convinced the school board new money could not be used to retain quality teachers. But the California Department of Education recently clarified that LCAP funds can be used for teacher quality.

The district's latest offer is 3 percent for 2014-15 and 4 percent for 2015-16, an increase of 1 percent over the previous offer for 2015-16.

The next round of mediation is Sept. 23.

AGREEMENT IN WESTMINSTER

In August the **Westminster Teachers Association** reached a tentative agreement with the Westminster School District for the 2015-16 school year. Highlights include a provision for a five-year evaluation cycle for highly qualified teachers with 10 years of experience; time for professional learning communities and professional development; a 5 percent salary increase retroactive to July 1, 2015; and credit for prior experience for salary schedules (including nurses). Teachers voted to ratify the agreement on Sept. 2.



HUNDREDS MARCH FOR THEIR STUDENTS

Val Verde educators and the Val Verde Unified School District (VVUSD) board are at impasse. **The Val Verde Teachers Association (VVTA)** represented its 800 educators in a mediation session in late August, during which more than 300 teachers participated in a rally and march.

Teachers say the district's actions are making it hard to retain and attract highly qualified teachers needed to provide students with the excellent education they deserve.

"It's difficult when teachers are not being valued by our district," said Kassandra Johnson, a Val Verde teacher who took part in the march. "Our community can't keep our quality educators when their compensation continues to drop."

At a school board meeting on Sept. 1, VVTA President Albert Trudel urged the board to do the right thing: "Our interest ... is to get the best teachers in our classrooms for our students. If we don't work on recruiting and retaining the best, we can't give the best education to our students."

The district is offering a 3 percent raise. Last year it offered one-time bonus payments. VVTA is asking for a 7 percent raise so wages are competitive, and permanent future salary schedule increases.

Because of low salaries, many leading local educators are moving to surrounding districts such as Moreno Valley and Riverside that offer better compensation.

Trudel says that Val Verde teachers agreed to a 5 percent pay cut eight years ago, at a time when the district was in financial trouble. They've yet to catch up, he adds.

The two sides were set to meet again on Sept. 9.

That ‘I Got It!’ Moment: Educators describe the ‘rush’ of teaching



► Print ads in 12 languages are running statewide in more than 80 newspapers.

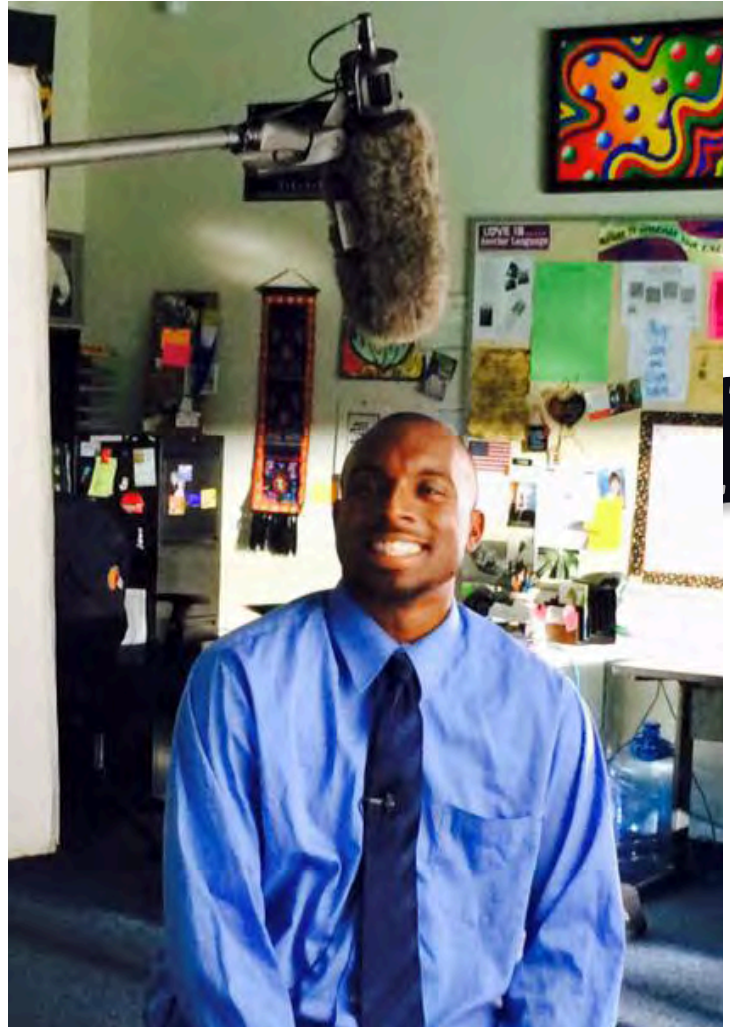
THANK YOU

Thank you to our members who gave their time to appear in CTA's media campaign:

- **HERNAN DIAZ**, East Side Teachers Association
- **DOMINIC DIRKSEN**, Steele Canyon Charter Education Association
- **CLAIRE GONZALEZ**, East Side Teachers Association
- **BRANDON JONES**, East Side Teachers Association
- **MARTHA MILLAN-SCHIMON**, Panama-Buena Vista Teachers Association
- **JESSICA PACK**, Palm Springs Teachers Association
- **CAROL PEEK**, Ventura Education Support Professionals Association

We also want to thank Liz Macias and her son Joel, Martha Perez, and Miranda Sepulveda for their participation.

► At right, **Brandon Jones**.



CTA's new back-to-school media campaign has officially hit the airwaves, debuting on radio and television, in print and online.

This year's campaign focuses on something truly special: that “aha!” moment when students get it. It's the gratifying instant when learning happens, when young faces light up and teachers experience the joy — or “rush” — of teaching, as Dominic Dirksen, Steele Canyon Charter Education Association, says in the TV spot.

The ads are unscripted and feature educators who speak movingly about why they're inspired to teach, and how that "I got it!" moment makes it all worthwhile.

"When students get it, their eyes get big, the lightbulb pops on," says Brandon Jones, East Side Teachers Association. "It's like magic."

"They've come to me and said, 'I've got it! I've got it! I did it! And I did it all by myself!' That's the moment when I know they start believing in themselves," says Martha Millan-Schimon, Panama-Buena Vista Teachers Association.

For teachers, the payoff goes far beyond routine work. "This is not just a job," says Jessica Pack, Palm Springs Teachers Association.

"The rewards I get are priceless," echoes Carol Peek, Ventura Education Support Professionals Association.



Carol Peek

The educators encourage parents to join them in connecting with students.

Dirksen begins: "It's incredibly important that parents and teachers work together..." and Pack finishes: "...because we both want what is absolutely the best for every child."

The spots were shot at Overfelt High School in East San Jose and were recorded in Spanish as well as English. Print ads in 12 languages are running statewide in more than 80 newspapers — including Asian, Latino, African American and Armenian publications. The campaign includes online ads focusing on family involvement and quality public schools for all students.

We snapped a few behind-the-scenes photos on set as our educators and students took their turn in front of the camera. ■



Watch the ads at cta.org/mediacenter.

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CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE

Learning

INSIDE:

- 44** The Need for Ethnic Studies Courses
- 48** What You Did on Your Summer Vacation



In an ethnic studies class, **Ron Espiritu** asks his students to create “pop-up” history books that represent different points of view, **page 44**.



► Ethnic studies teacher **Ron Espiritu** with student Joseline Cervantes; inset: pop-up history book made in Espiritu's class.



Inclusive Points of View

Ethnic studies classes connect with all students

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin
Photography by Scott Buschman

During an ethnic studies class at Animo South Los Angeles Charter High School, Norma Garcia and Haley Mack are busy creating “pop-up” history books from their perspective as people of color. They and other students are pleased their histories and cultures are the main focus for a change, and describe how thought-provoking and even transformative their experiences have been inside teacher Ron Espiritu’s classroom.

“It’s great to have the opportunity to learn about my Mexican culture and history,” says Norma Garcia, breaking into a wide smile. “It makes me feel good that my school cares about my culture and where I come from. I can’t even explain, it’s so exciting to me.”

Haley Mack, who is African American, enjoys looking at history from a black point of view.

“I didn’t know a lot about my culture before I took this class,” says Mack. “Most of the focus in my other classes has been on white historical figures. Learning what my people have gone through to be treated equally makes me feel so proud.”

Social studies classes usually look at civilizations, cultures and historical events from a western, largely Caucasian point of view. For students of color, the curriculum has little connection or relevance to their own experiences and culture.

Ethnic studies classes change that. Espiritu, for one, sees ethnic studies as a means to empower students, instill them with a sense of “historical consciousness and social justice,” and provide project-based learning that meets A-G college entrance requirements and is in alignment with the Common Core.

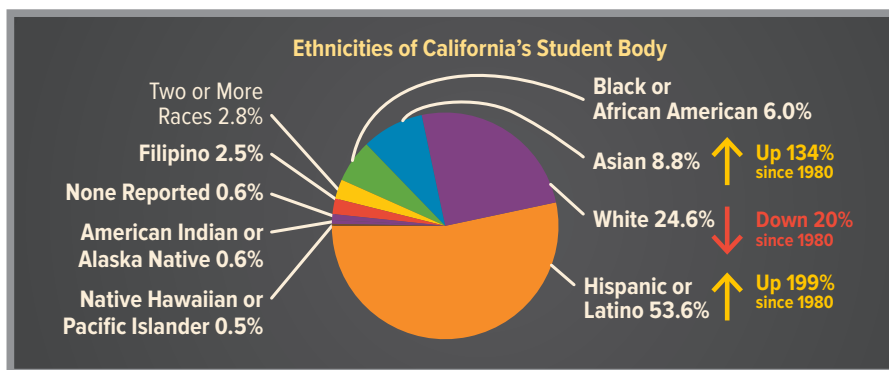
“It’s also a way to build unity between black and brown students,” says Espiritu, an Asociación de Maestros Unidos member.

His students recently learned that César Chávez and Martin Luther King Jr. communicated back and forth a great deal, because both men realized their individual struggles were also shared struggles about freedom and human dignity.

“I love bringing to light some of the ‘hidden history’ that’s missing from our textbooks,” says Espiritu, who belongs to Ethnic Studies Now, a coalition that has influenced increasing numbers of California school communities to support ethnic studies.

Momentum is growing

Ethnic studies, the interdisciplinary study of race, ethnicity and culture, was created decades ago to bring “cultural relevancy” to minority students and help prepare all students to live in a diverse world. Classes focus on one or more ethnic groups including African Americans, Latinos,

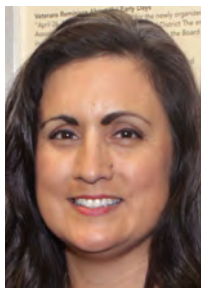


▲ Breakdown of the state’s total 2015 K-12 public school enrollment of 6.2 million students (KidsData.org; illustration by Kathleen Kowal).

Native Americans and Asians. The battle to allow ethnic studies classes began at the university level and has trickled down to secondary schools.

Last year, Montebello Unified School District voted to make ethnic studies a graduation requirement within two years and develop courses for pre-K–12 students within four years. Elective courses are already offered.

“Ethnic studies will provide a curriculum that will create a different kind of society and a different kind of school,” comments Lorraine Richards, president of the Montebello Teachers Association. “Teaching students to be globally minded and engage in critical thinking about our history and society



Lorraine Richards

“Teaching students to be globally minded and engage in critical thinking about our history and society will give us greater diversity.”

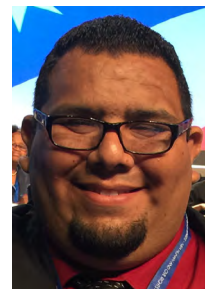
—LORRAINE RICHARDS, president, Montebello Teachers Association

will give us greater diversity. But implementation will be challenging, because students already have very impacted schedules.”

In the Los Angeles Unified School District, supporters shouted “We won! We won!” when the board approved making ethnic studies a graduation requirement beginning in 2019. New classes will be rolled out in 25 high schools this year. The full-credit semester-long courses include Mexican American Studies, African American History, Literature of Minorities in America, and Asian Studies.

“It’s important because our population is overwhelmingly students of color,” says Jose Lara, United Teachers Los Angeles, who taught ethnic studies at Santee High School. “I hope what’s happening in Los Angeles serves as a model throughout the state.”

As coordinator of Ethnic Studies Now, Lara has worked with community groups to make it a graduation requirement in Los Angeles, El Rancho, Montebello, Woodland, El Monte and Sacramento City school districts — and an elective in San Francisco, Santa Ana, San Diego, Lynwood, Garden Grove and Anaheim school



Jose Lara

►
Bridget Martinez,
multicultural
studies teacher
at McClatchy
High School in
Sacramento, with
a student.

districts. In July, he received a Social Justice Activist Award from NEA for his advocacy.

AB 101, a CTA-backed bill currently in legislative committee, would require the state to develop a plan to create elective courses in ethnic studies for grades 7-12. CTA's State Council voted to support making ethnic studies a graduation requirement in all districts.

However, not everyone believes ethnic studies should be a graduation requirement. Several readers on CTA's Facebook page wondered if there were already too many requirements in high schools. Among them was Bernadette Weissmann, Valley of the Moon Teachers Association, a teacher at Sonoma Valley High School.

"Honestly — what would you take off the plate?" asks Weissmann. "We went with A-G requirements for all students a few years back, and there is barely any room for another elective. One more academic class and I think our dropout/give-up rate would skyrocket." (For more viewpoints taken from Facebook, see Point/Counterpoint on page 22.)

Research shows strong benefits

"Students enjoy ethnic studies because it's discussion-oriented, and they get a chance to voice opinions," says Bridget Martinez, a multicultural studies teacher at McClatchy High School in Sacramento. "It's not like a typical history class where there's a right or wrong answer. It's a place where they can explore ideas and hear perspectives they may not otherwise be exposed to."

At the beginning of the course, class discussions focus on defining the concepts of culture, identity, stereotypes and racism. That leads to looking at social issues, such as immigration, poverty and gangs.

"It's essentially a study of race relations in America both historically and currently," says Martinez, Sacramento City Teachers Association. "We try to show the common threads of how some cultural groups have been treated and how they blend — or don't blend — into society."

The class is a powerful experience for students, who share their core values, culture and life experiences with one another. Martinez is pleased when parents comment that the curriculum extends beyond the classroom and sparks lively dinner table conversations.

Research shows that ethnic studies empowers students to perform academically and think critically.

A study by Christine Sleeter, "The Academic and Social Value of Ethnic Studies," finds that most curriculum presented in schools is Eurocentric, and students of color become aware of this as early as middle school, resulting in



► Race matters, says
Charles Toombs
of the Department
of Africana Studies
at San Diego State
University.



alienation. The study, published by NEA in 2011, finds that ethnic studies courses help combat this.

"There is considerable research evidence that well-designed and well-taught ethnic studies curricula have positive academic and social outcomes for students," the study states. "Curricula are designed and taught somewhat differently depending on the ethnic composition of the class or school and the subsequent experiences students bring, but both students of color and white students have been found to benefit from ethnic studies."



Not just for people of color

White students “absolutely” benefit from ethnic studies, says professor Charles Toombs, chair of the Department of African Studies at San Diego State University, which also offers Chicano, American Indian and Asian studies.

“It’s important for white students to see that not everything is viewed from the white, middle-class perspective and that other viewpoints exist,” says Toombs, California Faculty Association. “To be informed citizens of the world, we have to understand each other’s cultures. That’s the whole point of ethnic studies.”

He has heard people say that ethnic studies isn’t needed in today’s diverse world, and he strongly disagrees with that premise.

“People say that race doesn’t matter anymore and we’re

▲
David Ko says his ethnic studies class at Washington High School in San Francisco is a safe place for discussion.

To learn more about ethnic studies:

- Visit ethnicstudiesnow.com
- Go to the National Association of Ethnic Studies at ethnicstudies.org
- Check out tolerance.org/blog/value-ethnic-studies-all-students

living in a color-blind society, but that is not the truth. Our goal should be getting to a post-racist society. We’ve made a great deal of progress, but we’re not there yet. We need to talk about the lingering impact of institutional racism on our culture.”

David Ko, an ethnic studies teacher at Washington High School in San Francisco, observes that some white students feel uncomfortable in his class initially. But they shouldn’t, he says, because the point of ethnic studies is to hold discussions, not attack anybody because of their ethnicity.

“An important element of my class is making sure it’s a safe place for everyone to talk about race and racism — and making sure discussions are not targeted toward any specific students. The idea that racist beliefs are bad is very different from saying white people are bad. I’ve had white students come up after class and tell me our discussions made them think about their own identities and allowed them to have meaningful conversations without feeling attacked or defensive.”

Pagan Faye, a white student in his class, thought at first she wouldn’t like it, but now looks forward to it.

“We talk about interesting topics. One of the things we talked about is ‘What is normal?’ Our class concluded that no one is normal and we all have different perspectives.”

Also benefiting from the class are gay, lesbian and transgender students who face discrimination and homophobia, says Ko, United Educators of San Francisco.

“They feel a sense of kinship with people of color that have been oppressed, and solidarity is a powerful tool. In my class, students see how different forms of discrimination can overlap.”

Two signs hang prominently on Ko’s classroom wall. One says: “If you’re not outraged, you’re not paying attention.” The other says: “Love yourself; love your people.” Students find both of these pointers very helpful.

“We’ve learned how different races affect each other throughout history,” says ninth-grader Yan Yu. “We’re more aware of our surroundings and the stereotypes that surround our lives every day. And we’re more aware of our own thoughts, actions and histories in the process.” ■

For more member views on the need for ethnic studies, see Point/Counterpoint on page 22.



Discovering

THE MEANING OF FREEDOM

ROBERT MOSS, fifth-grade teacher at Rio Vista Elementary School, San Bernardino Teachers Association

On the Underground Railroad tour from Kentucky, through Ohio, Detroit, Canada and New York, I was one of nearly 60 educators feasting on historical knowledge and great storytelling. Not only did we expand our cultural awareness, we also understood the long-term effects of slavery. The biggest impact on me was understanding how hard slaves fought for freedom and the importance of education in their struggle. It was mind-blowing to realize that educating a slave was against the law, and the education we take for granted may have cost a slave their finger, their eye, or even their life.

I was aboard a recreated slave boat, wore bondage chains, and placed myself in a 2x2 crate, which fugitives used to mail themselves to other states. We analyzed spirituals. In the song "Wade the Water," slaves were not only reaffirming their belief in God's power, but instructing freedom seekers to "wade" and let the lake or river wash off the scent, to mislead the hounds.

Now I have a stronger base to teach from, with pictures, books and museum materials. The tour motivated me to spread the word before this history is lost.

What we did
this summer



Vacations ranged from learning adventures to life-changing trips

We know what many of our members did this summer, thanks to the "Educators Are Everywhere!" contest, which invited you to send photos of yourself on vacation. (See winners and other entrants in our August issue, and online at cta.org/educatorsareeverywhere.) Most entrants clearly had fun and learned something along the way. For some, the summer sojourn provided life-changing experiences that they'll be sharing with students in their lesson plans and curriculum. Here's a look at a few of our favorite days of summer.



Exploring

INCAN CIVILIZATION

ALICE NISHIMOTO, *Rice Elementary School in Rosemead, Garvey Education Association*

Here I am at Machu Picchu, Peru, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. I was a fifth-grade teacher for 17 years, but enrollment numbers changed, so now I have been assigned sixth grade and will need to teach about ancient civilizations.

Machu Picchu was built in 1450. I will show students my pictures and ask them to imagine what kind of tools the workers could have used to move the rocks. It's a way to

introduce the fulcrum and pulley system.

I will ask my students to analyze and discuss the thought processes of the Inca.

It took a long time to get to Machu Picchu. From LAX I flew to El Salvador, then Lima, then Cuzco. We acclimated ourselves to the elevation and took a bus to Urubamba. From there we took the train. Then we took a shuttle and hiked in.

There were so many granite rock pieces lying side by side with no gaps in between, just perfectly aligned. I kept wondering, "How did they do it?"

Spreading
PEACE

CONNIE JONES, *Cesar Chavez Middle School, San Bernardino Teachers Association*

I traveled with 44 high school student ambassadors with People to People, a student travel program where students are not just tourists, but ambassadors representing their communities and their countries. Our mission is to spread peace, one person at a time, and foster personal connections with people around the world for true global understanding. We started in Rome, and went on to Paris and London. This photo of Michelangelo's statue *David* was taken in Florence.

There was one chaperone for 10 students. The extended time together provided opportunities for students and teachers to talk about topics that school time doesn't allow. Students could share how certain experiences changed them and what the future might be as a result. Seeing students mature and develop more global perspectives changed me as well. These trips give me hope for our students and the future.



Lobbying

FOR EDUCATION

LISA LISS, *Woodlake Elementary School fifth-grade teacher, Twin Rivers United Educators*

MICHELLE CARROLL, *Health Professions High School medical science teacher, Sacramento City Teachers Association*

Michelle (left) and I are in the airport lobby after "Storming the Capitol" on National Teacher Day in Washington, D.C., with Erin Gruwell of the Freedom Writers. There were Freedom Writer teachers from all 50 states and some foreign countries who went to the Capitol to meet with President Obama. The president said he would

meet with five of us. Erin told him we were a family and would come together or none at all — so none of us saw him. But we met with former Congressman Patrick Kennedy, original Freedom Rider John Lewis, former presidential candidate Dick Gephardt and others, who assured us they were on the side of teachers.

Our trip was amazing. We left behind a book describing projects we did with our students at the Congressional Library in D.C. We recommend more teachers go to D.C. and show people how hard we work, because if legislators don't hear from us, how do they know what we're doing? It was an honor to be among the teachers there.



Being

LIFELONG
LEARNERS

SANDRA ORNELAS,
*Harborside Elementary
School, second-grade dual
language immersion teacher,
Chula Vista Educators*

I participated in the I Teach 2nd! Conference at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas July 6-9. I really enjoyed listening to the presenters and learning about new

strategies to implement in the classroom, since I am new to the grade level. With the Common Core, many of us are learning a new way of teaching.

Attending workshops is always fun. I met new teachers and shared experiences. As my bag says, "Never stop being a student." What I learned about enriching instruction and creating lesson plans definitely won't stay in Vegas.

JENNIFER CISNEROS, *Sierra Middle School
AVID teacher, Riverside City Teachers Association*

I attended the International Society for Technology in Education Conference in Philadelphia, which provided me with excellent tools to take back to the classroom. I am an AVID Excel teacher for our school. Our AVID program has been ranked as an international demonstration school, so I am always looking for tools to continue students' growth toward being 21st century learners.

One tool I will use is LiveBinders to help students stay organized and replace students' physical binders. Becoming paperless is one of my goals for this year. The conference was a technology geek's dream.



Wondering

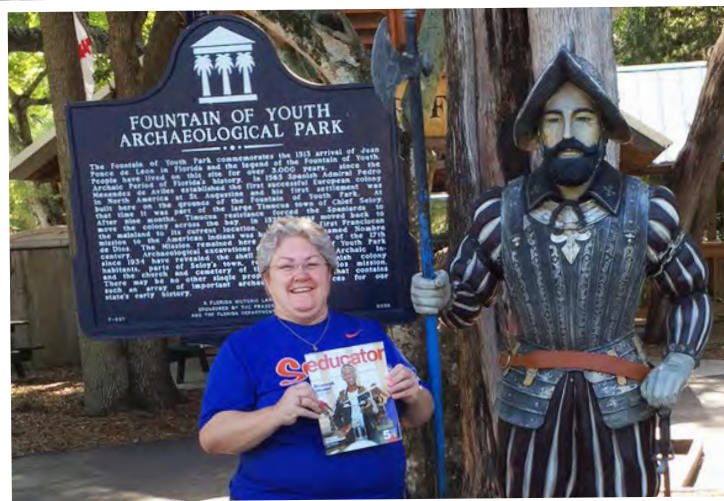
AT WILDLIFE

DIANE SCOTT, *Laneview Elementary School second-grade teacher,
CTA of Berryessa*

I had the privilege of cruising to beautiful Alaska this summer with my teenage son. The photo shows the Mendenhall glacier behind me. Our hiking guide was survivalist Kellie Nightlinger of the TV reality show "Naked and Afraid," who taught us that all plants in the rain forest are edible, and that moss makes a great insulator if you are ever lost in the rain forest and need to stay warm. Thanks to her, our hike was educational and visually stunning. We saw many bald eagles and a variety of marine animals including humpback whales, dolphins, harbor seals, sea lions, otters and salmon. In the rain forest, I (legally) gathered rock and moss samples and took many photos to use in this year's rain forest unit. Alaska's endless natural beauty and wilderness offerings are simply unmatched. Is there anywhere else where I could go to see a glacier and hear it calving, hike in a tranquil rain forest, kayak on a pristine lake, and be pulled in a sled by a 16-dog team in training for future Iditarod races? I don't think so.

GLORIA MATOBA, *Edison Elementary
School first-grade teacher,
Torrance Teachers Association*

While visiting Japan, we were in Nagano and visited the Snow Monkey Park. These famous macaque monkeys bathe year-round in the *onsen* (hot springs). We were able to get incredibly close to them.



Hanging

WITH FAMOUS WRITERS

ALICIA G. CRUMPLER, *Social Science Division chair, Administration of Justice Program, College of the Sequoias Teachers Association*

Here I am hanging out with author, playwright and poet Oscar Wilde in Merrion Square, Dublin, Ireland. I teach in Tulare County, which has high poverty and unemployment rates and a lack of an educated workforce. I use travel to discuss the benefits of education and where it can lead. I tell students that I worked my way through college, became a probation officer and then a college professor, and that the hard work has paid off with a great career that allows me to travel the world, seeing many amazing sights and meeting many amazing people. I share pictures and stories of my travels, hoping they will want to see those places for themselves.



Hiking

DOWN MEMORY LANE

JOHN DENT, *Dos Pueblos Senior High School video, yearbook, computer and leadership teacher, Santa Barbara Teachers Association*

My wife and I met in the Swiss Alps 18 years ago and returned this summer with our three kids. When we met, she was a 21-year-old student named Mimi Beller traveling after a year studying abroad in Spain. I was a 25-year-old Canadian intent on meeting as many people as I could. When I asked her name, she responded, "Why should I tell you? You won't remember it in the morning." The next morning when I saw her, she didn't remember my name. I teased her about it all day, and then at night we had one of the most meaningful conversations of our lives. Later, I got an email from her saying, "Hi, do you remember me?" We became pen pals for a few years. Our daughters are 10, 8 and 6. My oldest daughter took this picture; my wife was farther down the path with the other two. My kids loved visiting the site where their parents met.



Finding

THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

NORA ALLSTEDT, *Wilson Middle School music teacher, Exeter Teachers Association*

I visited St. Augustine, Florida, which is in St. John's County, one of the five counties known as Florida's First Coast. St. Augustine is the oldest continually occupied European established settlement in the continental U.S. The picture was taken at the Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park.



Checking out

CHURCHES

MARIA CROMBIE, *Fremont Elementary School second-grade teacher, Riverside City Teachers Association*

It was fun taking photos in Barcelona, Spain, in front of the Basílica de la Sagrada Família. My daughter graduated from college last year and has been teaching English in Spain, so we went to visit her. We took tours, went to museums, ate the cuisine, and enjoyed learning about the history. This absolutely invigorated me. There is so much to learn about the rest of the world. I will show photos and videos to my students when we share summer experiences; discuss history, culture and art in our social studies/language arts classes; and share photos and experiences when we learn about maps, countries and continents.



KARIN SYLVESTER MCCARTY, *Stonecreek Junior High English teacher, Panama-Buena Vista Teachers Association*

That's me, enjoying a sunny afternoon at the Church on Spilled Blood in St. Petersburg, Russia.



Enjoying

THE ALOHA SPIRIT

SHAWNA LYNNE ARELLANO, *Brekke Elementary School second-grade teacher, Oxnard Educators Association*

Here I am, enjoying the beauty at the Seven Sacred Pools in Maui, Hawaii. I always try to share culture and traditions I learn from my travels with students to help broaden their cultural awareness.



SCOTT LOPEZ, *Camino Grove fourth-grade teacher, Arcadia Teachers Association*

I loved hiking atop a volcanic crater on the Kilauea Iki Trail inside the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. This nearly 6.4-kilometer loop is a steep and rocky hike that descends and ascends about 400 feet into a dry lava bed, which last erupted in 1959, the same

year Hawaii became a state. Inside the crater are steam vents, cinder cones and spatter cones. This exploration was perfect for someone who teaches geology and chemistry. I also spent time snorkeling, exploring lava tubes, and kayaking down the famed Kohala Ditch, a 2.5-mile ride through a half dozen hand-dug tunnels, across bridges, and through rain forests. It was built nearly 100 years ago in the same area the legendary King Kamehameha was born in. I look forward to sharing knowledge of Hawaii with my students.



PLAN YOUR NEXT TRIP

Ready to go? CTA members are eligible for great travel discounts, including hotels, rental cars and tickets to California theme parks. See ctamemberbenefits.org for details.

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CTA&You

INSIDE:

- 54** Teacher Loan Forgiveness Programs
- 56** César E. Chávez Memorial Education Award Winners
- 58** Tips on Getting a Grant From the Institute for Teaching
- 59** CTA Bylaw Amendment



Adolfo Alejandre, student of **Maria Vega**, Napa Valley Educators Association, created this artwork and received a César E. Chávez Memorial Education Award. **See page 56.**



TAKE ACTION!

Contact your congressional representatives and urge them to make college more affordable. Specific steps to be taken include:

- Expand loan forgiveness programs to cover contingent faculty and encourage careers in education.
- Allow federal student loans to be refinanced when interest rates decline.
- Streamline federal loan repayment plans to create a single income-based option with affordable monthly payments.
- Restore federally subsidized loans for graduate students.

See nea.org/degreesnotdebt and look for the Legislative Action Center.



LOWER THAT LOAN

Student loan forgiveness programs reduce and even erase teacher debt

By Katharine Fong

New to teaching, or preparing to enter the field? If you're like many, you've taken out student loans to finance your education. You should know that student loan forgiveness programs are available to help you reduce or even erase this debt.

But pay attention, because eligibility and application for the programs are complicated.

"Student loan debt is at the top of everyone's mind right now because of the increasing costs of higher education and the financial needs that everyone has," says Sean Mabey, NEA Member Benefits affiliate relations specialist for California, Colorado and Nevada. Mabey presents informational workshops for CTA members on loan forgiveness programs and reducing debt.

Eligibility depends on your loan type, current teaching

assignment and length of time teaching, Mabey says. He stresses that all student loans are highly personal and you should contact your lender regarding your eligibility.

There are two types of forgiveness programs, according to Mabey. One is the Teacher Loan Forgiveness Program and involves federal Stafford loans and Perkins loans. The other is the Public Service Loan Forgiveness (PSLF) program.

The programs for Stafford and Perkins loans have different eligibility requirements and different levels of debt reduction and erasure. Requirements may include:

- You're a new borrower.
- You have been employed for at least five consecutive years in an elementary or secondary school designated annually as a low-income school.

- You teach in the fields of mathematics, science, foreign language, bilingual education, special education, or another field of expertise determined annually by the state to have a shortage of qualified teachers (see sidebar).

The PSLF program forgives the balance due on your William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program loan after you have made 120 qualifying payments while employed full time in public service, including teaching.

CTA Member Benefits has a list of online resources to help determine your eligibility, including links to teacher shortage areas in California and the rest of the United States and eligible schools, at ctamemberbenefits.org/studentloan.

Don't consolidate!

Prospective applicants need to know that they should not consolidate their student loans, because consolidation makes them ineligible for the forgiveness programs. (Consolidation bundles your loans with others' loans; that larger loan is taken over by private banks, not the federal government.)

Many are unaware of this critical factor. An educator based in Oceanside, who prefers not to be named, took out loans while pursuing two master's degrees and a doctorate in K-12 curriculum and instruction. In 2006, after she received her doctorate, she consolidated her loans. Though she went on to work as a special educator in public schools, her consolidation meant she could no longer take advantage of forgiveness programs.

"I had no idea that I would qualify for loan forgiveness," she says. "I was a CTA member at the time. My universities also did not readily provide this information. They help you get the loan, but after that you are on your own."

Mabey agrees that there needs to be more awareness and dissemination of information about the programs.

LEARN MORE

1. Check with CTA Member Benefits, which can point you to information, loan forgiveness applications and resources, at ctamemberbenefits.org/studentloan.
2. Look into NEA's Degrees Not Debt program aimed at making higher education costs affordable and lowering loan payments based on your income, at nea.org/degreesnotdebt or cta.org/degreesnotdebt.
3. Connect with NEA's Student Program at nea.org/studentloanhelp.
4. If you're still in college, ask your financial aid office for information.
5. Locate your paperwork at the National Student Loan Data System at nslds.ed.gov.

"When you graduate, you're bombarded with offers to consolidate," he says. "If you're an engineer, that makes sense, but for people who go into education, consolidation means they are no longer eligible for loan forgiveness programs that are out there."

An incentive to teach

More awareness of the forgiveness programs could provide a real incentive for people entering the field and staying in it. The programs are a win-win for both individual educators and the schools and subjects they work in.

Mabey urges prospective applicants not to be put off by the complex paperwork and application process. "For 80 to 90 percent of people, you teach for five years at a high-need school, have your administrator sign that paperwork, and you're done," he says.

He adds that if you're an educator in the midst of fulfilling your five-year teaching obligation before applying to a forgiveness program, you should check if you qualify for one of the plans available that may lower your monthly student loan payment based on your income.

"Try to get your payments as low as possible," he says. "You need to strike a fine

balance between fulfilling your obligations as a borrower and maintaining as much of the loan as possible to be forgiven."

Eligibility for the forgiveness programs has no end date. Mabey says, "I have had some people come to me after a workshop and say, 'I taught nine years at one of the low-income schools or in one of the shortage fields. I didn't consolidate my loans. Am I eligible?' I say, 'Yes!'"

You can learn more about other Member Benefits trainings and more exclusive Member Benefits at CTAMemberBenefits.org and neamb.com. You can also contact the CTA Member Benefits department at (650) 552-5200 if you are interested in arranging a training for your local. ■



CALIFORNIA'S TEACHER SHORTAGE AREAS FOR 2015-16

- English/drama/humanities
- History/social science
- Mathematics/computer education
- Science
- Self-contained class
- Special education (including state special schools)

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education

Excerpts from winning essays:

"With all of these farm workers joining together (in the United Farm Workers of America), their voices were heard. This helped provide clean water and field toilets and lowered pesticide spraying on farm workers. My grandfather was happy that they lowered the amount of pesticides being sprayed. My mom remembers that sometimes they wouldn't give them gloves to pick the fruit and [the farmworkers] would worry about getting chemicals on their hands. ...

"Thanks to [César Chávez], farm workers are taken seriously. ...
"Yes we can."

Peter Gutierrez, student of **Johnathan A. Chakerian**, Kings Canyon Teachers Association

"His leadership of teamwork, cooperation and collaboration led to improved working conditions for grape farmers. He would not have this victory if he had done the job all by himself. ... He was able to achieve his goals because [collaboration and teamwork] helped him raise awareness in a more powerful manner to the government. I have decided to implement Mr. Chavez's ideas of team work into my community work [to end obesity]."

Grace Ling, student of **Anne Greene**, Fremont Education Association



Artwork by Hailey Lynaugh, student of **Elizabeth Vega**, Alvord Educators Association.



Artwork by Jayda Pignataro, student of **Laura Gonzalez**, Windsor District Education Association.

2015

César E. Chávez Memorial Education Awards

Our annual awards program invites teams of students and their teachers to express the impact César Chávez's life and work have had on them. Through essays and artwork, students demonstrate an understanding of the vision and guiding principles by which the great labor leader and civil rights activist lived his life.

Our judges were impressed with the caliber of entries. See cta.org/scholarships for more information. Congratulations to all the winners!

Visual Art Award Winners

| Grades | Reg. | Student(s) | Teacher | Chapter |
|---------|------|--|----------------------|----------------------------|
| Pre-K-K | II | Justin Carmona | Theresa Sawyer | Di Giorgio Elem. School TA |
| 1-2 | III | Melanie Cabeza | Lori Anaya | Hueneme EA |
| 1-2 | I | Christian Gonzalez | Robert Ellis | UT of Richmond |
| 3-4 | I | Michael Mendez | Sandra Isbell | San Ramon Valley EA |
| 3-4 | I | Luke Morrison | Sandra Isbell | San Ramon Valley EA |
| 3-4 | I | Sharanika Rajsekar | Heidi Bownas | San Ramon Valley EA |
| 3-4 | I | Shay Salmon | Heidi Bownas | San Ramon Valley EA |
| 5-6 | I | Natalia Maiorana | Leslie Collins | San Ramon Valley EA |
| 5-6 | I | Neda Anayah | Kate Lenk | San Ramon Valley EA |
| 5-6 | I | Brooke Dwyer | Janice Forster | San Ramon Valley EA |
| 5-6 | I | Tiffany Nguyen | Shanti Arnold | Franklin-McKinley EA |
| 7-8 | II | Norman Gonzalez | Roxi Romo | Bakersfield Elementary TA |
| 7-8 | IV | Britney Lemus | Jean Leuenberger | Alvord EA |
| 7-8 | I | Sam Wilson-Mietz, Jordan Rodgers, Katya Sierra | Nancy Thomas | Guerneville School TA |
| 7-8 | I | Jayda Pignataro | Laura Gonzalez | Windsor Dist. EA |
| 9-12 | II | Idalis Lee | Joy Cornish-Bowden | Tracy EA |
| 9-12 | I | Adolfo Alejandro | Maria Vega | Napa Valley EA |
| 9-12 | IV | Hailey Lynaugh | Elizabeth Vega | Alvord EA |
| 9-12 | II | Joel Mejia | Kimiko Azama | Tracy EA |
| 9-12 | II | Margaret Rocha | Joy Cornish-Bowden | Tracy EA |
| 9-12 | II | Jacob Maline | Renee Ellice Blevins | Hanford Sec. EA |

Written Essay Winners

| Grades | Reg. | Student(s) | Teacher | Chapter |
|--------|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1-2 | II | Sasha Zuidema | Frank Leguria | Sylvan EA |
| 3-4 | IV | Chamudee Sellapperuma | Elvira O. Bermudez | Assn. of Placentia Linda Educators |
| 3-4 | IV | Ray Gallegos | Elvira O. Bermudez | Assn. of Placentia Linda Educators |
| 3-4 | IV | Camden Ramsey | Elvira O. Bermudez | Assn. of Placentia Linda Educators |
| 3-4 | II | Ashley Noriega | Suzanne Konkell | Twin Rivers UE |
| 3-4 | II | Dany Vargas | Suzanne Konkell | Twin Rivers UE |
| 5-6 | II | Tea Zuidema | Frank Leguria | Sylvan EA |
| 5-6 | II | Peter Gutierrez | Johnathan A. Chakerian | Kings Canyon TA |
| 5-6 | III | Joel Gonzalez Zamora | Therese Brady | Santa Maria Elem. EA |
| 5-6 | I | Alexander Koo | Jennifer Pereyda | Fremont Unified Dist. TA |
| 5-6 | II | Divya Katyal | Mitch Marinovich | Sylvan EA |
| 5-6 | I | Kayley Seow | Mary Rodrigues | Fremont Unified Dist. TA |
| 5-6 | I | Sophia Weaver | Georganne Nuger | Livermore EA |
| 7-8 | I | Claire Ngo | Christina McGovern | Oak Grove EA |
| 7-8 | I | Janel La | Christina McGovern | Oak Grove EA |
| 7-8 | IV | Layla Ziani | Jennifer Stuart | Temecula Valley EA |
| 7-8 | I | Akira McMillen | Rebecca Vanden Heuvel | Guerneville School TA |
| 9-12 | IV | Yen Nguyen | Courtney Ziani | Perris Secondary EA |
| 9-12 | I | Ryan Perrine | Celia Lamantia | Assn. of Sonoma COE |
| 9-12 | I | Grace Ling | Anne Greene | Fremont EA |
| 9-12 | IV | Jade Cepurac | Jack Lawrence | San Diego EA |

Teacher-Driven Change Gets Real

The Institute for Teaching funds your great ideas

By Cynthia Menzel



IFT board members **Adam Ebrahim, Serina West, Eric Enriquez, Michelle Ramos.**

CTA’S INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING

(IFT) knows that school change must be teacher-driven and based on what is working and successful in our schools and classrooms. IFT awards Educator Grants up to \$5,000 and Impact Grants up to \$20,000 to pursue creative, innovative ideas that drive change. In six years IFT has awarded 167 grants totaling almost \$1.8 million. For more information, see teacherdrivenchange.org.

Below, four teacher-leaders on the IFT board share their insights on IFT and applying for grants. (To read an expanded version of this story, including the board members’ comments on participation in Regional Teacher Think Tanks, visit cta.org/iftboard.)

Describe IFT

Advice on applying for a grant?

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| ADAM EBRAHIM, <i>former ninth-grade human geography teacher, Fresno Teachers Association, six years</i> | IFT rejects the narrative of failure in public schools. It instead builds from what teachers and public schools do really well. We are interested in promoting virtuous, not vicious, cycles and helping magnify the impact of what excellent classroom teachers do every day. | Get support from key stakeholders and think in terms of labor-management collaboration. Sustainability is a highly attractive quality in a grant proposal. When you are thinking about the design of your project, start with the end in mind. Lastly, don't be afraid to balance pragmatism with aspiration. |
| ERIC ENRIQUEZ, <i>Hayward Education Association, sixth-grade math and instructional coach, 16 years</i> | IFT is one of the ways teachers can see their membership dues at work in their classroom. IFT provides seed money so teachers can turn creative, innovative ideas into reality. I've loved that grant ideas that we've seen blur the lines between community and classroom, making real-world applications. | [Your project should] look at what's working, make it better or strength-based. Look at the strength-based matrix on the IFT website [under the Grants tab]. Those seven factors were designed and created based on positive inquiry and what's working. Also, IFT provides grant-writing workshops. |
| MICHELLE RAMOS, <i>Covina Unified Education Association, eighth-grade physical science teacher, 25 years</i> | IFT advocates for the teacher as the expert. We know that many answers, opportunities and sometimes miracles are happening daily in California classrooms. We know who makes that happen. | IFT grants are intended to fund a teacher's passion. The grant-writing is straightforward and matches how teachers plan for classroom projects and activities. Know that awarding of grants is based solely on the seven pillars of the strength-based matrix. |
| SERINA WEST, <i>Oceanside Teachers Association, kindergarten teacher, 16 years</i> | IFT is truly about teachers leading their profession and using their voice to spearhead the future of public education. IFT highlights the successes of teachers, students and education and uses those successes to advance the teaching and learning experience. | No idea is too big or too small!! Teachers are already doing a lot of wonderful things, and some things don't get done to their fullest potential due to a lack of funds. IFT grants can help teachers with their unfunded great ideas. Don't allow the idea of grant writing to scare you away from applying. It is a super friendly process! |

Council to consider bylaw change

CTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS members from directorial districts are currently elected by all State Council members. If State Council approves this proposed bylaw amendment, only those State Council members in the directorial district will elect board members who represent a geographical district.

2015-2016 Proposed CTA Bylaw Amendment

Provisos/Transition:

1. For State Council review, debate and possible modification; and final consideration by written ballot at the October 2015 State Council meeting.
2. Amendment to be effective upon adoption.

Legend:

Additions are underlined.

Deletions are ~~struck through~~.

Unaffected and unchanged text is denoted by asterisks (* * *).

The proposed bylaw amendment was moved forward for consideration and action by Council at the June 2015 State Council meeting.

ARTICLE VI – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. Composition and Number. * * *

Section 2. Qualifications. * * *

Section 3. Nomination and Election.

a. Directors from Directorial Districts.

(1) Election. Directors from directorial districts shall be elected ~~by~~ at the State Council of Education ~~at its~~ Annual Meeting by directorial districts, or, when a vacancy occurs between Annual Meetings, at the next regular meeting. (Amended January 1998)

(2) Establishment of Directorial Districts. * * *

(3) Nominating Caucus. * * *

(4) Deferral of Election. * * *

b. Racial and Ethnic Minority Directors. * * *

c. NEA Director Representation. * * *

Section 4. Term of Office. * * *

Section 5. Vacancies. * * *

Section 6. Meetings of the Board. * * *

Section 7. Waiver of Notice. * * *

Section 8. Quorum and Prohibition of Use of Proxies. * * *

Section 9. Powers and Duties. * * *

EXTRA CREDIT SOLUTIONS

Mathematics Expressions 1. LONG DIVISION 2. SQUARE ROOT 3. RIGHT ANGLE
4. PRIME NUMBER 5. COMMON DENOMINATOR Challenge: ABSOLUTE VALUE

Places in California 1. SAN DIEGO 2. ALCATRAZ ISLAND 3. SANTA MONICA
4. DEATH VALLEY 5. LOS ANGELES Challenge: LAKE TAHOE



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Phrases and Places Without Vowels

By Alan Stillson

IN THE PUZZLES BELOW, you are given only the consonants (including Y) in two-word phrases or places. Your task is to find the missing vowels and word break to complete the phrases or places. Answers on page 59.

Mathematics Expressions:

Example: DCMLPNT = DECIMAL POINT

1. LNGDVSN _____
2. SQRRT _____
3. RGHTNGL _____
4. PRMNMBR _____
5. CMMNDNMNTR _____
- Challenge: BSLTVL _____

Places in California:

Example: BVRLYHLLS = BEVERLY HILLS

1. SNDG _____
2. LCTRZSLND _____
3. SNTMNC _____
4. DTHVLLY _____
5. LSNGLS _____
- Challenge: LKTH _____

Alan Stillson is a CTA member and the author of *Middle School Word Puzzles* and numerous other puzzle books. Find out more at stillsonworks.com.



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