

# california educator

SEPTEMBER 2016 VOLUME 21 ISSUE 2

## Politics in the Classroom



Finding teachable moments  
in a crazy election year  
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## Plus: Campaign 2016

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# September is National Life Insurance Awareness Month!

Do you have the tools you need to protect yourself and your loved ones?



# Know Your Options

You do a lot of things for a lot of people. But while your students depend on you to teach, your loved ones depend on you to take care of just about everything else. Now is a great time to educate yourself about your current Life Insurance coverage, and the options available to you as a CTA member. Visit The Standard, your CTA-endorsed provider of Life Insurance at [standard.com/ctalifervices](http://standard.com/ctalifervices) to learn more today!

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# #WeAreCTA Our Voice, Our Union, Our Profession



## What's Happening Now

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#### Turf Wars

Are crumb rubber athletic fields really safe? **PAGE 18**

#### Campaign 2016

Information about the issues, and CTA's Voter Guide. **PAGE 27**

#### Unsung Heroes

Site Reps and you. **PAGE 46**

#### Illness No Obstacle

Teacher won't let sickle cell keep her down. **PAGE 16**

#### Dinner in a Box

Meal kits for educator lifestyles — and lesson plans. **PAGE 13**

#### The Reel Thing

A teacher, kids and fish. **PAGE 45**

#### Teacher Pensions

Healthy and on track. **PAGE 50**

### DIGITAL

#### #KidsNotProfits

New campaign takes aim at privately run charter schools. [kidsnotprofits.com](http://kidsnotprofits.com)

#### Yes on Prop. 55

We can't go back to days of slashed education budgets. **#Yeson55 #Prop55**

#### Find Insta-Community

That would be teacher community on Instagram. **#TeachersBeLike #TeacherLife**

#### Vergara Case Ends

CTA celebrates as state Supreme Court declines to review. [bit.ly/2bCikV1](http://bit.ly/2bCikV1)

#### What Do You Hope For?

Responses to chalkboard question resonate. [bit.ly/2bW4oN8](http://bit.ly/2bW4oN8)

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Apply for training and coaching for chapter leadership roles. **PAGE 9**

#### Leading the Profession

Educators train one another in CTA's Instructional Leadership Corps. [ctaipd.org](http://ctaipd.org)

#### STEM Symposium

Learn about California's updated standards, including NGSS. [stemcalifornia.org](http://stemcalifornia.org)

#### NEA Academy

Complete your PD, CEU and clock-hour requirements with online courses. [neaacademy.org](http://neaacademy.org)

### MEMBER BENEFITS

#### Get Access

Popular discount program means big savings for members. **PAGE 52**

#### New Retirement Plan

CTA's exclusively endorsed 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan. [CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp)

#### Disaster Relief

Financial assistance for losses due to natural disasters. [CTAMemberBenefits.org/drif](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/drif)

#### Video Overview

Everything you need to know about the CTA Member Benefits program. [bit.ly/2bJPVmo](http://bit.ly/2bJPVmo)

Above, Steve Acosta, site rep at Howe Elementary School, Culver City. Story on page 46.



FEATURES

# TURF WARS

How safe are crumb rubber fields? **PAGE 18**

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**COVER:** Clockwise from top right, educators Jennifer Elemen, David Knatcal, Jasmin Brown and Andy Gibson.

**THIS PAGE:** Top left, students practice on artificial grass. Top right, Sierra Vista Elementary School celebrates its reopening.



**YOUR OPINIONS ARE WELCOME!** We accept email and letters (250-word limit); and we excerpt user posts from CTA social media platforms. All text is subject to editing for clarity and space. If you send photos or other materials, identifications and permissions are required. [Editor@cta.org](mailto:Editor@cta.org); [#WeAreCTA](https://twitter.com/WeAreCTA)



## Back to School Issue

I had many comments on the August *Educator* that I wanted to share.

Regarding Laurie Jones' "Your Voice" perspective, in which she talks about loving her students: She is right. Every student has at least one positive attribute. Find it, give earned praise, build on it, discover more good talents, and build a wall of real success. Give the divas some responsibility so they can use their flamboyance positively!

Additional suggestions for the first day of school and beyond: Have a community buffet breakfast on opening day. All parents meet teachers and get a copy of student's schedule and report card dates.

Keep all assignments in a binder at a side table so recent absentees can copy what they missed and ask you for a new due date. Accept no late work without a real excused absence. Say "Hand in what you have," tell them to write "Help" on top and list their problems. You look, hand it back with suggestions and a new due date. If they meet it and improve, they can still make an A! This way, you never fall behind and students always get to improve.

Always ask for feedback from students. Often they can make you aware of your body language and other mannerisms that distract and confuse them, which you simply never realized you did. For example: "Why do you always face the door?" "Why do you tend to accept any answer from a girl, but push harder for critical thinking from a young man?" "Do you know you draw boxes in the air every time you make a point that will be on the test?"

Prepare to switch concerns if kids arrive in emotional turmoil about something that just happened in the school or the community. Facilitate a civil discussion. Ask for possible solutions that could be presented to community leaders, police, etc.

### MARYMELISSA GRAFFLIN

UNITED EDUCATORS OF SAN FRANCISCO (RETIRED)



@MargaMarshall, Mt. Diablo Education Association, and education student @SamanthaHeinri3 liked our August tips on teaching with emojis.



▲ At a Prop. 55 message training are San Jose Teachers Association members Renata Sanchez; Jim Marshall, SJTA vice president; Taunya Jaco; Matthew Seymour; and Andrea Reyna. Photo credit: Mike Myslinski

## Show Us Your 55!

Passage of Proposition 55 on this November's ballot is essential if California public education is to continue to get back on track following the ravages of the Great Recession (see page 30). Please **Show Us Your 55!** – snap a photo showing your support for Prop. 55 and send it to [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org) (with full name and local chapter) or post it to [Facebook.com/WeAreCTA](https://www.facebook.com/WeAreCTA) or [@WeAreCTA](https://twitter.com/WeAreCTA) on Twitter and Instagram ([#Prop55](https://twitter.com/Prop55)).

## Survey Says...

Just a few more days to be entered to win an iPad. All you need to do is answer a few questions in our online survey at [cta.org/educator\\_survey](http://cta.org/educator_survey) by Sept. 25.

About what, you ask? We want your input: What do you think of the *Educator*? What do you like, what do you want to see more of? What don't you like and don't need? We want to hear from you.



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# california educator

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2016, to Aug. 31, 2017) are \$843, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see [cta.org/contribution](http://cta.org/contribution) for details). Up to \$18.62 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives and is not deductible for income tax purposes.

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

### CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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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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# Off to a Great Start



Eric Heins and other CTA officers talk about the need for Prop. 55 in a new video at [bit.ly/2cdP1A2](http://bit.ly/2cdP1A2).

**WHAT A TERRIFIC START** to the school year! I can feel educators' energy everywhere I go. I know that you have great ambitions and plans for your students this year, and your enthusiasm is contagious.

The upcoming election adds an extra dash of excitement, and many of you are working hard on local, state and national levels to support positions and candidates who value public education. It's critically important to pass Proposition 55, which prevents our schools and colleges from going back to the days of drastic budget cuts. Prop. 55 simply maintains the income tax rates on California's wealthiest and puts those funds directly into schools and classrooms. Without its passage, we risk going back to the ruinous years — not that long ago — of educator layoffs, school and library closures, and jam-packed classrooms.

To underscore education's need for stable funding, a new report from the California Budget & Policy Center shows the tremendously positive impact of Proposition 30, passed in 2012 with your help. Prop. 30's boost to state revenues allowed California to reinvest in preschool, K-12 schools and community colleges. While we are still not where we should be, Prop. 55 will let us continue to make progress to give all our students the public education they deserve.

It's our commitment to students that is behind Kids Not Profits, a campaign by educators and CTA to raise public awareness about the charter school industry and draw attention to the need for more accountability and transparency at privately managed charter schools. These schools receive public funding but are not held to the same standards and accountability measures as traditional public schools. The campaign exposes the coordinated agenda by a group of billionaires to divert money from neighborhood public schools to privately managed charter schools.

Privately managed charter schools often cherry-pick students through restrictive admissions policies and take taxpayer funds from public schools, leaving districts and the broader student population without resources. Kids Not Profits also reveals the billionaires promoting the private charter industry and their agenda. They are spending millions — \$11 million in this year's

*“While we are still not where we should be, Prop. 55 will let us continue to make progress to give all our students the public education they deserve.”*

primary election alone — to influence state legislative and county school board elections across the state.

CTA co-sponsored legislation this year to ensure equal access for all students, and to ensure fiscal transparency and accountability at all charter schools. California lawmakers approved Assembly Bill 709, which requires charter schools to disclose how they spend taxpayer money, prohibits charter school board members and their families from profiting from their schools, and ensures that charter schools comply with California's open meetings and open records laws. This bill is now on the governor's desk. Visit [kidsnotprofits.com](http://kidsnotprofits.com) for more information, and urge the governor to sign AB 709.

Kids Not Profits is not an indictment of charter school educators, who share our dedication to students and to teaching. I am proud to count more than 5,000 charter educators as CTA members. And in the past year, hundreds more have organized to join CTA and start their own local unions as they stand up for students and accountability.

The power of our collective, growing voice gives us hope and optimism in the coming year — and in the coming election. Our future depends on the work we do together.

**Eric C. Heins**  
CTA PRESIDENT  
[@ericheins](https://twitter.com/ericheins)

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Editor's  
Note

# Living in Interesting Times



Students stage a mock presidential debate at Kennedy High School in Fremont.

**SAY WHAT YOU** will about this year's presidential election, one thing it's not is boring. Differences between the candidates' views are so stark, and verbal exchanges so fierce, that the daily news, speeches, events and debates provide a trove of teachable moments for social studies students everywhere.

Our story "**Politics in the Classroom**" (page 22) looks at how educators are incorporating these moments into ultra-relevant lessons on topics from immigration to electoral votes to appointing Supreme Court justices.

"The election has been a circus, and everyone is paying attention — including students," says David Knatcal, who teaches civics at Burroughs High School in Burbank. Knatcal and other educators agree that because of this awareness, it's an exciting time to be teaching history and government.

It's also a critical time for voters. As our special **Campaign 2016 section** (page 27) lays out, this coming election presents us with pivotal choices for the future — not just in who becomes president but in how we continue to give our students a 21st century education. California schools are still recovering from the Great Recession. Passing Propositions 55, 58 and 52, as well as electing candidates who support students and public education, will ensure that we can protect our children and build on what's working.

Protecting our students is the whole point of CTA's **Kids Not Profits** campaign (page 36), which brings awareness to the growing industry of privately run charter schools. These charters siphon funding from neighborhood public schools with little oversight and great profit for their operators, while their billionaire backers actively push a political agenda. It's time to demand accountability and transparency from this industry.

Concerns about artificial turf in athletic fields are raised in our feature "**Turf Wars**" (page 18). Crumb rubber fields have saved water and been a big improvement over spotty, uneven grass, and limited tests have found them to be safe. But activist groups and some educators and school districts are concerned that high levels of toxins from recycled tires may be harmful to athletes and kids, and now broader tests are being conducted.

Speaking of protection, "**Site Reps at Your Service**" (page 46) tells about union site reps who volunteer their time on top of their full-time job to be a resource and sounding board — and your first line of defense. These unsung heroes defend your rights, monitor and enforce the contract, and advocate to improve working and learning conditions.

Protections like these are necessary for educators to do their jobs and inspire and guide students forward — day after day, year after year. In "**Reflections of a Veteran Educator**" (page 17), Leslie Young writes beautifully of how she continues to find meaning in her "crucial" mission, and why "I will continue to accept it until I can no longer do so physically or mentally. Anything less feels like caving in to those who would like to see this great public experiment fail."

Onward and upward!

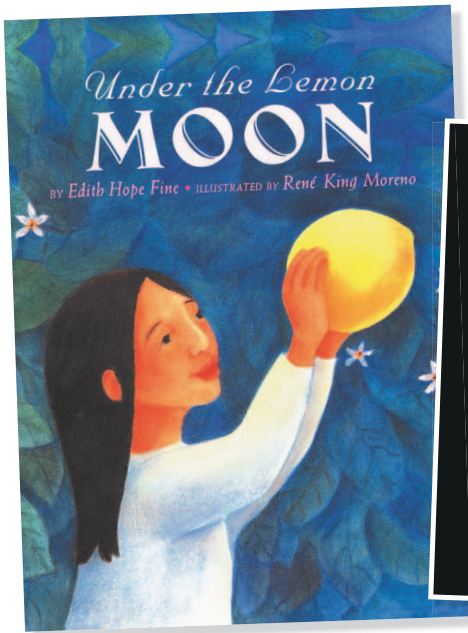
**Katharine Fong**

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## Good Works

Santee Teachers Association member Chris Stanley has been bringing his passion for fishing to students for almost 22 years (see page 45). Know of other members doing great things for kids or other educators? Tell us at [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org), with "Good Works" in the subject line.

# CALENDAR



## What to Read Now

Excellent choices for class, as recommended by [#CaliforniaReads](#); see [cta.org/californiareads](http://cta.org/californiareads) for more.

In *Under the Lemon Moon* (grades 1-2), a man steals lemons from young Rosalinda's beloved tree, which soon falls sick. While searching the Mexican countryside for a legendary wise woman who helps heal the tree, Rosalinda spots the man selling her lemons at the market, with his wife and infant nearby. Soon the tree bears fruit again; Rosalinda hands them out to all, including the thief, telling him to plant the seeds. The story, by Edith Hope Fine and illustrated by René King Moreno, charms with its themes of forgiveness and regeneration.

The protagonist of *Dumplin'* (grades 9-12), by Julie Murphy, is self-proclaimed fat girl Willowdean Dickson, 16, who has always been comfortable in her own skin. But she starts to doubt herself when she becomes attracted to Bo, so to take back her confidence she enters a local beauty contest to show the world that she deserves to be up there as much as any skinny girl does.

U.S. Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera, California-born son of farmworkers, will read the inaugural poem to kick off National Hispanic Heritage Month.



## HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Celebrate the history, contributions and cultures of Americans whose ancestors came from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America.

Hispanic/Latino Americans have a dominant presence in the U.S. and particularly in California: 39 percent of the state's population is of Hispanic or Latino origin; Hispanic/Latino students make up almost 53 percent of public school enrollment in California.

Hispanic Heritage Month begins each year on Sept. 15, the anniversary of independence of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Mexico, Chile and Belize also celebrate their independence days during this period, and Columbus Day (Día de la Raza) is Oct. 12.

Educators can find lesson plans, activities and more at [nea.org](http://nea.org) and the Library of Congress website, [loc.gov](http://loc.gov).



## WALK-IN TO RECLAIM YOUR SCHOOL

On Oct. 6, join thousands of educators, students, parents and community members across the country to show support for your school – and for the schools all our children deserve. The *Alliance to Reclaim Our Schools* urges groups to gather before school starts in the morning and walk in together – a highly visible, positive and collaborative action that demonstrates commitment to public education. The alliance includes community organizations and labor groups fighting for educational justice. [reclaimourschools.org](http://reclaimourschools.org). (See video of previous walk-ins at [bit.ly/2bIX89h](http://bit.ly/2bIX89h).)



# International Day of Peace

*“If we are to reach real peace in the world, we shall have to begin with children.” —Gandhi*

Teach your students the many meanings and applications of peace, from nonviolence and social justice to restorative practices and the universal language of sports, on Sept. 21. Originated by the United Nations in 1981, the International Day of Peace promotes the ideals of peace, freedom and human dignity based upon respect for and understanding of individual and cultural diversity. Classroom ideas include participating in local service projects, creating works of art, and planting trees or a garden. See [internationaldayofpeace.org](http://internationaldayofpeace.org) for resources and curricula.



## **REGION I LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

**SEPTEMBER 23–25** CONFERENCE

Fairmont Hotel, San Jose. Keynote speaker is Earl Wiman, NEA Executive Committee member. He helped shape NEA's "Leading the Professions" initiative. ► [cta.org/conferences](http://cta.org/conferences)

## **CCA FALL CONFERENCE**

**OCTOBER 7–9** CONFERENCE

Sheraton Grand Sacramento. The Community College Association's fall conference focuses on member engagement and offers a variety of trainings. See page 11 for more details. ► [cca4me.org](http://cca4me.org)

## **2016 CALIFORNIA STEM SYMPOSIUM**

**OCTOBER 9-11** CONFERENCE

At the Anaheim Convention Center; speakers include Reshma Saujani, CEO of Girls Who Code. Engaging curriculum and classroom practices for California's updated standards, including the Next Generation Science Standards. ► [stemcalifornia.org](http://stemcalifornia.org)

## **REGION II LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE**

**OCTOBER 14–16** 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.

► [cta.org/conferences](http://cta.org/conferences)

## **NEA FOUNDATION GRANTS**

**OCTOBER 15** APPLICATION DEADLINE

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.

► [neafoundation.org](http://neafoundation.org)

## **ESP LEADERSHIP ACADEMY**

**OCTOBER 29** APPLICATION DEADLINE

This training is for 20 education support professional members interested in chapter leadership roles and planning to be involved for at least five years. Session 1 is Feb. 3-5 in Burlingame. Session 2 is March 24-26 in Los Angeles. Accepted participants will be reimbursed for travel, lodging, meals and fees. Email [kmoriarty@cta.org](mailto:kmoriarty@cta.org) or call 415-479-6616.

## **VOLUNTARY DUES CONTRIBUTION**

**NOVEMBER 1** OPT-OUT DEADLINE

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. ► [cta.org/contribution](http://cta.org/contribution)

## **PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION**

**NOVEMBER 8** ELECTION

Be sure to vote and help get out the vote! Check out CTA's recommendations and your personalized voter guide online.

► [cta.org/campaign2016](http://cta.org/campaign2016)

## **AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK**

**NOVEMBER 14–18** EVENT

"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.

► [nea.org/aew](http://nea.org/aew)

## CAASPP Results: Just One Indicator

The California Department of Education released results of the 2016 California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) online tests last month. They show that the percentage of students who met achievement targets in math and English language arts (ELA) increased at every grade and in every student subgroup compared with 2015, the first year of the tests.

The scores are “one measurement of progress in our schools while California remains in the middle of a massive transition in the state’s educational system as school districts continue to implement the California standards,” says CTA President Eric Heins.

Nearly half the students tested met or exceeded standards in ELA, and nearly four in 10 met or exceeded standards in math. In both subject areas, however, more than half failed to meet achievement targets. Results also showed a continuing achievement gap: While all student groups’ scores rose, students from low-income families, English learners and some ethnic groups had significantly lower scores compared with other student groups.

Heins stresses the need for a system to assess student learning based on multiple measures. “Educators and parents know that students will always be more than a standardized test score. This is why it is important that California adopt an accountability system that gets beyond test scores and includes multiple whole-child and whole-system factors that address student outcomes, educational opportunities and equity.”



## Can't Ever Go Back!

Devastating budget cuts during the Great Recession — at its height a mere six years ago — slashed art, music and athletic programs, shuttered schools and school libraries, forced class sizes to balloon, and decimated the ranks of educators in the state. California has restored much of what was lost, but not all. Vote yes on Prop. 55 this November to ensure public education has the support it needs to provide students with the schools they deserve. See page 30 for more information.

## SICKLE CELL FACTS FOR SEPTEMBER AWARENESS

Many educators suffer from chronic illness, including sickle cell disease, an inherited blood disorder. That doesn't stop them from being outstanding educators, of course — see our profile of middle school teacher **Ardelia Aldridge** on page 16. In recognition of National Sickle Cell Awareness Month, a few facts:

- While 70,000 Americans have sickle cell disease, 2.5 million in America have the sickle cell genetic trait. If both parents have the trait, their child may be born with the disease.
- Tests can tell whether someone has the disease and whether they might pass it on to their children.
- People affected include those of African, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, Greek and Middle Eastern descent.
- There's no cure, but research in gene therapy (seen as the best hope for a cure) is ongoing.



SCDAA  
"Break The Sickle Cycle™"

Source: Sickle Cell Disease Association of America



# GOOD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MEANS...



## ELEMENTARY STUDENTS

read well by the end of third grade



## MIDDLE SCHOOLERS

pass important courses



## HIGH SCHOOLERS

stay on track for graduation



## COLLEGE STUDENTS

earn their degrees



## WORKERS

succeed in their jobs

## SEPTEMBER:

# Attendance Awareness Month

Too many absences can keep students from succeeding in school and in life. Missing 10 percent of the school year, or just two or three days every month, can translate into third-graders unable to master reading, sixth-graders failing courses, and ninth-graders dropping out of high school. Educators can teach the value of attendance, use parent-teacher conferences to talk about attendance, and promote a culture of attendance. For toolkits and other resources, see [attendanceworks.org](http://attendanceworks.org).

## Making It in School

Setting up a maker space at school? Based on the thriving DIY maker movement, maker spaces give students opportunities to create and invent using a variety of tools, from 3-D printers and the cloud to soldering irons and sewing machines. Educators should explicitly link maker-based projects to classroom curriculum and academic standards, said Chris O'Brien, a former teacher who helps schools with their maker and project-based learning spaces. This "helps ensure that students will learn," he told NPR Ed, "but also that the maker movement won't become just another educational trend."

Michael Stone, director of innovation at Public Education Foundation, agrees, and offers four other guiding principles to maker education: balance clear expectations with open-ended problems, assess process alongside content, anticipate the skills and design scaffolds and transfer accountability to students. See [kqed.org/mindshift](http://kqed.org/mindshift) for more.



## CCA'S FALL CONFERENCE

Make plans now to join the Community College Association's Fall Conference, Oct. 7-9 at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento Hotel.

This first of three CCA conferences for 2016-17 focuses on member engagement and will offer a variety of trainings on the best ways to reach your members.

Keynote speakers include state Senator Marty Block, above, who will be receiving CCA's Legislator of the Year award. NEA's Earl Wiman will also speak.

Come prepared to network and exchange ideas, and learn new strategies for strengthening your chapters. ► [cca4me.org](http://cca4me.org)



# District Health Benefits Shouldn't Be "One Size Fits All"

The California Schools Employee Benefits Association is among the top five largest school joint powers authorities in California. We focus on meeting the needs of member districts by maintaining stable rates, innovative products, programs and services (*like our Marketplace Healthcare Exchange*) that enhance the benefit offerings for your members. With our quality vendor partners, creative, comprehensive benefit choices include quality medical, dental, vision, life insurance, plus an unmatched menu of additional options.

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# Quotes & Numbers

Compiled by MIKE MYSLINSKI

“This is a teachable moment. Our work clearly isn’t done. That’s why CTA members stand with all education and community stakeholders in campaigning to pass Prop. 55. Our students deserve no less.”

—CTA Board member and Fremont educator **GREG BONACCORSI**, speaking at the Aug. 30 Yes on 55 local campaign kickoff in San Francisco.

“Voters are urged to vote yes on Prop. 55. In the decade-plus this extended ‘temporary’ tax will buy, they must demand that legislators get serious about reforming California’s tax system to bring stability and accountability to state finances.”

—From a Sept. 1 editorial by the *Bakersfield Californian*, urging support for the California Children’s Education and Health Care Protection Act, Prop. 55.

“Prop. 55 is a critical investment for our children and for our state’s future — one we cannot afford to lose. Public schools and colleges are just starting to come back from the devastating cuts made during the recession, and unless we pass this measure to extend the current tax rates on wealthiest Californians, our schools and students will again lose billions of dollars.”

—Lake Elsinore Teachers Association President **BILL CAVANAUGH**, at an Aug. 25 Yes on 55 media event in Riverside County.

“Over the past 20 years, California’s economy has rapidly globalized, and our state became an international trade powerhouse. Students must learn English, but knowledge of more than one language opens new doors of opportunity. A second language skill promotes higher levels of abstract thought, memory retention and cognitive development.”

—Yes on Prop. 58 op-ed in the Aug. 5 *San Diego Union-Tribune* by state Sen. **MARTY BLOCK** and Assembly Member **LORENA GONZALEZ**, co-sponsors of the CTA-backed LEARN Initiative on the Nov. 8 ballot.

“When teachers feel protected, they can stand up for their students. It’s a good day for students and for educators.”

—CTA President **ERIC HEINS**, in an Aug. 22 *San Francisco Chronicle* story about the California Supreme Court’s refusal to review the flawed *Vergara v. California* lawsuit, an unsuccessful attempt to dismantle teachers’ job protections.



## OCT. 24

Last day to register to vote in the Nov. 8 California election. Registration is available online at [registertovote.ca.gov](http://registertovote.ca.gov).

## 25

Number of local measures on the ballot in San Francisco this November, not including the 17 statewide ballot initiatives.

## 700,000

Approximate number of voters who registered with the California Democratic Party between January and July of this year, a surge that means about 45 percent of the state’s registered voters are now Democrats, the highest percentage in more than a decade, the *Sacramento Bee* reported Aug. 22.

## 312

Small number of California public schools, out of 10,393 existing schools, that offer students the kind of valuable multilingual programs that Proposition 58 will greatly increase, according to the California Department of Education.

## 85%

Percentage of Donald Trump presidential campaign statements that are half true, mostly false, false, or in the “pants on fire” realm of lies, as of Sept. 5, according to PolitiFact, which won a 2009 Pulitzer Prize for its fact-checking work.



Clockwise from top left, plates from Sun Basket, Hello Fresh and Purple Carrot.



## What's for Dinner?

### A few to try

Look for introductory specials

**Hello Fresh** (featuring Jamie Oliver), [hellofresh.com](http://hellofresh.com), \$8.75 to \$9.90 per meal

**Purple Carrot** (vegan), [purplecarrot.com](http://purplecarrot.com), \$9.25 to \$11.33

**Sun Basket** (organic, non-GMO), [sunbasket.com](http://sunbasket.com), \$11.39

**Blue Apron**, [blueapron.com](http://blueapron.com), \$8.74 to \$9.99

**Green Chef**, [greenchef.com](http://greenchef.com), \$10.49 to \$14.99

**Gobble**, [gobble.com](http://gobble.com), \$11.95 to \$13.95

**PeachDish**, [peachdish.com](http://peachdish.com), \$12.50 or less

**Plated**, [plated.com](http://plated.com), \$12

### Meal subscription plans work for educators' lifestyles — and lesson plans

#### THE PROPOSITION:

Pay for a set number of meals, get farm-fresh ingredients delivered weekly to your door, follow directions to cook up dinner.

#### THE MATH:

Meals are relatively affordable when you factor in time spent grocery shopping or the cost of takeout, and often provide enough food for lunch the next day.

#### EDUCATOR BONUS:

Make culinary or sociocultural discoveries that can be shared with students.

"Understanding the connection between the food we eat and the impact these choices have on us all can provide opportunity for a rich

dialogue with students," says Andy Levitt, founder and CEO of Purple Carrot.

"Every insert [that comes with the meal ingredients] usually includes education about vegetables in season this week or unique spices you may not have seen before," says Amy Endemann, marketing director of Sun Basket. "Our menus let you discover new flavors, new ingredients."

#### THE DEETS:

Most plans' meals can be made in 30 to 45 minutes; expect to do some food prep. (Gobble offers gourmet meals in 10 minutes using one pan.)

#### THE BIG PICTURE:

It's a lifestyle, and a community.

"Purple Carrot is more than just a meal kit," says Levitt. "The company is building a community of people who are energized to make a difference in our health and in our environment."

"We care most about helping you and your loved ones enjoy meaningful time together," says Rebecca Lewis, Hello Fresh's in-house registered dietitian. "Taking a small portion of the day to slow down and focus on a basic need like food sustains us more than just nutritionally. Food has the power to connect us to our bodies, our emotional drives, other people, and even nature itself."



By @samdemuro



## The Latest: Instagram Stories

Inspired by Snapchat, these are temporary (unless you make them permanent) videos or photos strung together in a gallery that tells a story. They're meant to be fresh and fast. Examples of classroom use:

- Post a series of images/videos of student presentations throughout the day.
- Have one student per week create a Story (or be a co-creator depending on age) in the classroom to document a particular lesson or school event from their perspective.
- Monday icebreaker: Use a fun question – “What is something you learned over the weekend?” “What is the story of your name?” “What is the funniest joke you know?” – and have students take turns answering it. A great way to encourage student voice.
- Hold a contest with other classes for the most creative Instagram Story.
- Break the class into small groups, give each a tablet (with class Instagram account already signed in), and have them come up with their own Story about a given topic.

## Social in the Summer

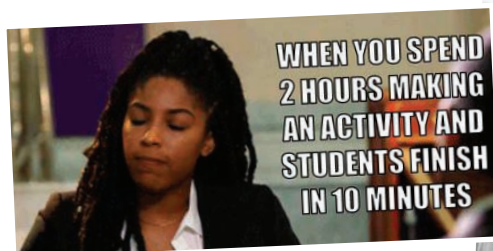
Participants in the Communications Strand at CTA's Summer Institute (#CTASI16) show their support for Prop. 55. #Prop55



## GLOSSARY

- **Hashtag activism:** Using social media and hashtags to promote social justice or educational issues, such as #YesOn55, #PublicEducation, #BlackLivesMatter.
- **Meme** (pronounced “meem”): An idea, typically referencing something in pop culture, often a humorous image with text, that can be copied or re-created and spread rapidly by Internet users.

#teachermeme of the month (actually two, to catch up on the opening months of school)



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#WeAreCTA

For our full social media directory, see [cta.org/social](http://cta.org/social)



# Meet Ardelia Aldridge

Educator shares inspiring story of battling chronic illness

By SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

**A**rdelia Aldridge looks perfectly healthy. But there are times when she struggles to come to work, is too ill to work, or is even hospitalized.

Aldridge, like many educators, is battling chronic illness. Managing her symptoms is a constant challenge. But it's worth it to her.

"I love what I do," says Aldridge, who teaches English and English language development at Frank J. Zamboni Middle School in Paramount. "I love young people, and I love seeing their world view develop. Teaching is something I feel called upon to do."

She inherited a love of teaching from her parents, who are both educators. She also inherited sickle cell anemia, which makes her one of an estimated 70,000 people in the U.S. living with the disorder.

The condition is the most common form of sickle cell disease, a hereditary disorder in which red blood cells become hard and crescent-shaped, causing various medical problems including lung tissue damage, painful episodes and stroke. The blockage of blood flow can damage organs including the spleen, liver and kidneys.

She has been able to manage her disease by eating right, getting enough rest, and keeping her stress level down. She avoids contact with others who are sick, and asks students with colds to stay in the back of the room. She is well aware that a case of the

sniffles for some could lead to hospitalization for her.

Aldridge, 39, recalls that years ago, those with sickle cell disease rarely reached adulthood.

"There are more and more of us surviving into our 40s and 50s," she says. "I'm fortunate that I can manage my illness and be a productive member of society and hold down a full-time job. Many with this illness aren't functioning as well and have more episodes and complications."

September is National Sickle Cell Awareness Month, and Aldridge hopes that by sharing her story, she can educate others about the disease. She would also like to increase public awareness that *many* educators are battling a variety of chronic illnesses, and they deserve empathy and compassion. She is hoping in the future to organize a support group of such educators.

"Whether the illness is physical or mental, it's an obstacle teachers face on a constant basis as we work hard to do our best for students," says Aldridge, a member of the Teachers Association of Paramount who serves on CTA's State Council. "I am living with this disease, but I do not want to let it define me. I am struggling, but I am also a role model." ■

*See facts about sickle cell disease on page 10.*



Photo by Scott Buschman

## In Ardelia's words:

### Many people don't understand...

that you really have an illness if there's not something outward they can see. So sometimes it's awfully hard for people to understand that you are ill.

### My illness has made me...

more compassionate when children in my classroom have physical or mental challenges such as ADD or depression. I had a student with sickle cell, and I made sure she was staying hydrated, resting and not jaundiced.

### My union has...

supported me while I manage my illness. A strong union contract provided me with good health insurance. Our catastrophic leave policy allows union members to donate sick leave, and I used donated sick time for two surgeries. Unionism – and strength in numbers – allows my fellow teachers to help me. I know that I am not alone.



# Reflections of a Veteran Educator

By LESLIE YOUNG

“To make your life in teaching is largely to find your own way.”

—William Ayers, *To Teach: The Journey of a Teacher*

**MONDAY, 6 A.M.** My lone car in the dimly lit parking lot. An uncommon silence on the damp blacktop. Invisible bird chatter emanating from the motionless sycamore trees dwarfing the upper-grade bungalows. A yapping mutt standing in the strewn yard of a house behind the school’s chain-link fence. These are the moments when the stir of life’s details collides with what lies ahead of me.

During mornings like this, I can believe anything is possible. I will persuade Luis to finally stop yelling out during lessons. Noe will say he had a fantastic weekend at his dad’s house. Yvonne will win the district speech contest. We can even finish the read-aloud we started three weeks ago. And I can actually leave at the end of the day, knowing I’ve taught every standard the district wants my students to master this month.

But the only part of this scenario that truly happens as planned is the walk from my car to the classroom. The rest is part of my daily mission items on a never-ending to-do list. I see myself as a boat — moving forward on an unpredictable lake — leaving a wake behind my stern. The wake’s water is deeply affected by the boat’s movement, but eventually each ripple arrives at its own destination.

Teaching is terribly imprecise despite the

claims of staff development “experts.” The day’s plans are constantly gnawed on by phone calls asking for students to go to the office, last-minute schedule changes on the lounge whiteboard, the whims of the district technology server, and the moods of the students (just to name a few).

The neatly-typed lesson plans with administrator-requested standard numbers next to objectives are merely that: plans. Teaching is not about *following* them, but *persevering* in achieving the goals. My job is to guide the bow of the boat whether the water is smooth, choppy,

“Teaching is intuition applied to technique; a nonstop exercise in professional judgment honed by persistent resilience.”

shallow or deep, and adjust the direction accordingly. Such a daunting task sends many well-meaning beginners to the ranks of educators who make up the dreaded attrition rate.

Those who stay and continue to find meaning in their mission learn to redefine the obstacles by relegating them to the status of minor details. Phone call from the office during a lesson? Assign a student to answer the phone and pass on the message. Surprise assembly noted on the lounge whiteboard? Flip the language arts lesson until after the assembly and postpone the district-mandated character

education lesson. Server down? Teach the math lesson without the brand-new online publisher’s presentation slides that all teachers in the school are expected to use fluently. Students restless and resistant? Have everyone stand up and do five minutes of calisthenics in a foreign language.

Teaching is intuition applied to technique; a nonstop exercise in professional judgment honed by persistent resilience. If you lose the original motivation you had to teach in the first place, it’s all over. It will then be very difficult to give in a way that the profession demands.

To say that I have never felt a sense of dread as I walked across that parking lot in the predawn hours would be a lie. Teaching, but more importantly *continuing* to teach, takes faith: faith in the idea and practice of a meaningful exchange within a system that inspires the teacher and learner all too rarely. Against this backdrop, my mission becomes crucial, and that is why I will continue to accept it until I can no longer do so physically or mentally. Anything less feels like caving in to those who would like to see this great public experiment fail.

So, it’s on to tomorrow at 6 a.m. ■

*Leslie Young is a member of the Anaheim Elementary Education Association. A National Board Certified Teacher, she is a sixth-grade GATE teacher and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports coach at James Madison Elementary School.*

**Your Voice** Have something to say about life as an educator or the art and science of teaching? Tell us a story (no more than 650 words) that illustrates your experience or opinion, and it could be published here. Send to [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org) with “Your Voice” in the subject line. Submissions subject to editing for clarity and space.



# TURE WARS

By SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN  
Photos by SCOTT BUSCHMAN

Coach Dave Beard on Hoover High School's athletic field, made with crumb rubber.



# How safe are crumb rubber fields?



Football and wrestling teams at Hoover High School in Glendale take the field for practice on a beautiful spring afternoon. Exercises include rolling enormous tires across the field, stretching and running in place. Students also do “ladder drills” on all fours. At times their faces nearly touch the turf.

**IT LOOKS LIKE GRASS**, but the field is actually synthetic turf sprinkled with “crumb rubber” pellets made from recycled tires like the ones students are rolling across the field. Most athletes at the school play on it. This is one of approximately 902 synthetic playing fields in California and 12,000 in the U.S. Recycled tires are also used to resurface playgrounds where millions of children play.

The crumb-rubber pellets embedded in artificial turf often end up in the mouths, ears and wounds of players — especially those who dive onto the field. They stick to skin and clothes. Some educators and health experts fear the pellets may cause cancer in athletes, while others aren’t worried about ill effects.

Dave Beard, football and wrestling coach at Hoover High, says the artificial turf is a big improvement. The old field was mostly dirt and sometimes muddy, lacking clear lines.

“I have not personally heard any concerns about this issue from administrators, parents or fellow teachers,” says Beard,

an adapted PE specialist and Glendale Teachers Association member. “But I know some people are concerned about crumb rubber.”

## How crumb rubber took the field

Back in the early 2000s, a new type of artificial turf was created using ground-up rubber from recycled tires. Pellets of crumb rubber are poured between the blades of fake grass to provide more cushion and support. Many universities and half of National Football League stadiums use crumb rubber.

The fields typically last 10 to 15 years and may cost as much as \$1 million to install. In drought-stricken California, the new generation of synthetic turf has been viewed as an attractive alternative to grass, which requires large amounts of water, fertilizer and maintenance.

Crumb-rubber fields are also viewed as being “green” because millions of old tires that were piling up in dumps are recycled. The tires are considered unsafe for landfill because of their chemical makeup and flammability. Crumb rubber contains approximately 250 chemicals, many of them toxic, including benzothiazole, carbon black and heavy metals.

Since 2005, the state’s recycling program, CalRecycle, has given more than \$42 million in grants to pay for crumb-rubber playing fields in schools and parks.

## Concerns over fake turf sprout up

Amy Griffin, former U.S. women’s national soccer team goalkeeper and current University of Washington coach, has a list of athletes who played on crumb rubber and developed cancer. She started compiling the list in 2008 when a few goalkeepers she knew with lymphoma wondered if their illness was related to



Children play on artificial turf. Since 2005, California has given more than \$42 million in grants to pay for such fields.

crumb-rubber pellets. In 2014, NBC News reported the story, which was then carried by ESPN and other news outlets. By 2015, her list grew to 200 athletes with lymphoma and included 158 soccer players, 101 of them goalkeepers. (Goalkeepers frequently dive onto the field.)

In 2008, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found zinc and other toxins in crumb rubber to be far below dangerous levels and safe to play on. So did the Consumer Product Safety Commission. However, the EPA has since backpedaled on its study, which encompassed only four playing fields, calling it “limited” in scope, and recommended that state and local agencies conduct their own studies.

“Limited studies have not shown an elevated health risk from playing on fields with tire crumb, but the existing studies do not comprehensively evaluate the concerns about health risks from exposure to tire crumb,” the EPA states on its website.

Makers of crumb rubber say there is no evidence connecting artificial turf and cancer. And to date, no scientific studies have found a connection.

But that has not deterred skeptics and activist groups — including the nonprofit organization Environment and Human Health — from asserting that high levels of toxins in rubber tires may indeed be harmful to athletes, especially if inhaled or accidentally swallowed, and that heat and sunlight break down particles in the pellets over time, releasing toxins into the atmosphere. There is also concern about water runoff carrying dangerous chemicals from the phony turf. The city of Santa Rosa noted that “levels of zinc, selenium, lead and cadmium leaching into groundwater from crumb rubber underlayment may be significant,” and urged that more research be done on this issue.

The Mount Sinai Children’s Environmental Health Center has also expressed concerns about health risks. “Exposures to chemicals present in crumb rubber at very high levels, typical of animal or occupational studies, are known to cause birth defects, neurologic and developmental deficits, and some can even cause cancer,” notes the center. “Children have increased exposure to toxic chemicals due to the unique way they interact with their environment. Because they are growing and developing, their bodies are also more susceptible than adults to chemical exposures.”

## Tire turf plan flattened in Sebastopol

The West Sonoma Union High School District Board unanimously approved a plan in February 2015 to install crumb-rubber fields at Analy and El Molino high schools. Both campuses were poised for the turf rollout. But in the face of



Sebastopol educator Starr Hergenrath with her grandchildren. She helped convince her school district to ban crumb rubber fields.

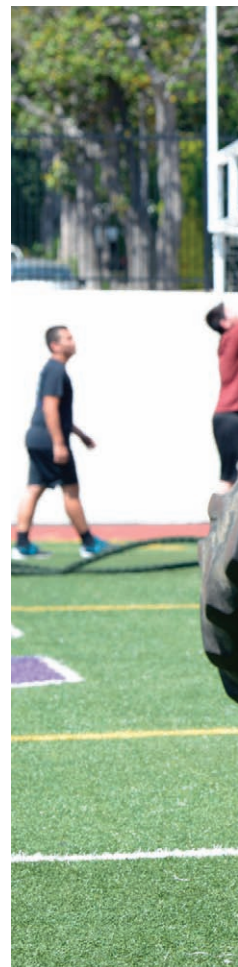
opposition and safety concerns, the district decided at the last minute not to go with crumb rubber. It considered two alternatives: infill made from 100 percent cork and another from coconut fiber and cork. They decided to go with cork and pay \$170,000 more per field than they would have paid for crumb rubber.

At the forefront of the opposition to crumb rubber in the district were Starr Hergenrath, a theater arts teacher at Analy High School in Sebastopol, and her daughter Nell Hergenrath, an educator whose children play soccer in the district.

Starr Hergenrath was in the middle of a theater production when she read a letter from a parent who was concerned that the fields could cause health problems. She contacted Nell, who took the ball and ran with it. The duo organized a letter-writing campaign, and after receiving hundreds of letters, the school board had a change of heart. Not everybody was on board; some staff wanted to go with the crumb-rubber fields and use the savings for other things, such as offsetting employee health care costs.

“Why should my grandchildren and students have to play on crumb-rubber fields and possibly get cancer?” asks Starr Hergenrath, a member of the West Sonoma County Teachers Association. “As a teacher, my responsibility is to protect our children and provide them with a safe environment.”

The rural Northern California school district has joined Los Angeles Unified School District and the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation in banning crumb-rubber fields due to health concerns.







## New state and federal studies roll out

State Sen. Jerry Hill (D-San Mateo) was so concerned that he asked the Legislature to press the “pause” button twice to stop facilities from installing new fields until the state conducted a comprehensive study on the safety of crumb rubber. He was rejected twice. His third watered-down legislative attempt would have required communities to publicly discuss alternatives to crumb rubber before installing them. That was also defeated. The crumb-rubber industry spent more than \$6 million lobbying to defeat these bills, according to CALmatters, a nonprofit, nonpartisan media organization.

However, in November 2015, California legislators decided to spend \$3 million to study the link between cancer and artificial turf. The study is being conducted by California’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment and is expected to be completed by June 2018.

In January, two U.S. senators asked President Obama to launch a federal study about whether crumb rubber is safe for students. Sens. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.) and Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), the top two Democrats on the Senate Commerce Committee, were alarmed at recent reports and asked for further scrutiny

of crumb rubber. In February, it was announced that three agencies — the EPA, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry — would participate in a \$2 million federal research project and release a report by the end of this year.

While the state and federal agencies study the safety of crumb rubber, California will continue to award millions of dollars in subsidies to schools and cities for installing crumb-rubber fields for children to play on.

What could the impact of the new studies be?

If the fields are deemed safe, school officials can breathe a sigh of relief and continue business as usual. If health hazards are confirmed, there may be outrage and a demand for schools to remove the fields, which would be costly and disruptive, to say the least.

Beard, the Glendale coach, hopes that new research will finally reveal whether the turf is safe or not. “I believe we need to make informed decisions based on the upcoming studies. If the studies prove there is a correlation between disease and synthetic fields, we have an obligation to do something. Research is critical. Parents and kids have a right to know. Ignorance is not bliss.” ■



Several state and federal studies are now under way to determine the safety of crumb rubber fields.

# Politics in the Classroom

Finding teachable moments in this crazy election year

By SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN  
Photos by SCOTT BUSCHMAN



Students William Dixon and Katrina Moniz get ready to spar as presidential candidates in social studies class at Kennedy High School.

**T**he first-ever female nominee of a major political party. Talk of building a wall and mass deportations of immigrants. Name-calling and bullying that would be banned in any schoolyard. Presidential hopefuls threatening to abandon their political parties — and vice versa.

Indeed, there have been many astonishing moments in the strangest, most unpredictable and nastiest presidential election in U.S. history.

The never-boring campaign has provided educators with many teachable moments on how government works and how the past influences the present. Teaching in an election year not only makes social studies classes ultra-relevant, but provides educators with unique opportunities to create exciting new lessons.



## CANDIDATES DEBATE THE ISSUES

Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump — along with the Green and Libertarian party candidates and others — are holding a spirited debate at Kennedy High School in Fremont. OK, to be honest, it's really students in wigs and masks impersonating them. However, their outstanding speeches, thoughtful answers to tough questions, and video “commercials” show that a great deal of work has gone into the campaigns.

The commercial created by student William Dixon (who portrays Trump) shows him pulling someone down from a fence to demonstrate his stance on illegal immigration. With the fence climber on the ground, he vows to build a wall and name it, of course, the Donald Trump Wall. Students laugh at the antics and boo the message.

“It was a great experience because I learned how to campaign and how to devise a strategy to reach voters. And I did not fire anyone, although I joked about it,” says Dixon.

Katrina Moniz (who portrays Clinton) plays “The Woman Card” with an actual card and explains that she is the most qualified candidate for the job.

“I’m actually a big Bernie Sanders supporter, but from this experience I learned a lot about Hillary and like her more.”

After the debate — on topics ranging from immigration to foreign policy and legalizing marijuana — it is time for students to vote. Clinton is declared the winner when teacher Jennifer Elemen tallies the votes.

“It’s such a fun and relevant time to be teaching AP U.S. government,” says Elemen, Fremont Unified District Teachers Association. “My students are watching the candidates closely. They are very opinionated about this election. Some will be voting for the first time.”



Kennedy social studies teacher Jennifer Elemen leads her class through mock campaigns and elections based on current events.

*“I want them to be involved, care about government, and practice their civic duty of voting. I am trying to empower them to participate in democracy.”*

— JENNIFER ELEMEN,  
Fremont Unified District Teachers Association

Elemen, who received the 2016 Outstanding Secondary Teacher Award from the California Council for the Social Studies, reminds students that “every vote counts” and the stakes are high.

“We talked about the president’s power to appoint Supreme Court justices, and that some justices might retire or die during the next administration,” she says. “Students learned that whoever the president appoints will be very important in deciding future policies for this country. It gave them pause.”

She adds, “I want them to be involved, care about government, and practice their civic duty of voting. I am trying to empower them to participate in democracy.”

## DEBATE PARTIES, POLITICOS AND VOTER REGISTRATION

What David Knatcal loves most about teaching civics in an election year is that students begin asking questions as soon as the bell rings.

“They say, ‘Mr. K, did you hear about this? Did you see that on TV?’ The election has been a circus, and everyone is paying attention — including students.”

Debate night parties organized by Knatcal, adviser for the Junior State of America (JSA) Club at Burroughs High School, lured many students by offering extra credit. The teens expressed surprise to see such mean-spiritedness and vulgarity on live television, such as candidates comparing the size of their hands and criticizing the appearance of fellow candidates’ spouses.

JSA and the social studies department sponsored a voter registration drive for students who will be 18 by the November election, and also organized a political party fair, inviting local Republican, Democratic, Green and Libertarian party representatives to speak and answer questions.





“It was amazing. It was fun. It was sometimes uncomfortable for all of the different party members to be sitting next to each other,” recalls Knatcal, Burbank Teachers Association. “They were nervous. I think some of them had never answered questions from students or sat at a table with each other before. It wasn’t exactly a debate, but there was some jabbing back and forth.”

### DISCUSSIONS ENCOURAGE CRITICAL THINKING

“Let’s continue our discussions on the presidential election and be as honest as possible. Don’t worry that people are going to judge you.”

Social studies teacher Jasmin Brown encourages Chavez Middle School students to look beyond the sensationalism and focus on issues. Students are asked to stand on one side of the room if they believe immigration laws should change — and on the other if they support the status quo. All but two want change.

“The next president should focus on reforming immigration,” asserts seventh-grader Claudia Parra. “Even immigrants have rights because they’re human.”

Hillary Banuelos, also in seventh grade, opines that talk of building a wall detracts from the real issues. “I think the candidates should be talking about important things like poverty and hunger.”

Many students in the district feel “targeted” by Trump’s pledge to deport undocumented residents and build a wall, says Brown, who also teaches AVID and leadership classes. Even students who would not be directly impacted are worried that a relative or neighbor might be affected if Trump is elected president, she says. Some students have asked Brown how Trump could be against immigration if his wife is an immigrant.

Brown is a teacher leader in the CSU Long Beach and CSU Dominguez Hills sites for the California History–Social Science Project (CHSSP), a collaborative of historians, K-16 teachers and scholars dedicated to excellence in history and social science. After receiving a statewide teacher leadership award from CHSSP last fall, she was honored by her district.



In David Knatcal's civics class at Burroughs High School, students start asking questions as soon as the bell rings.



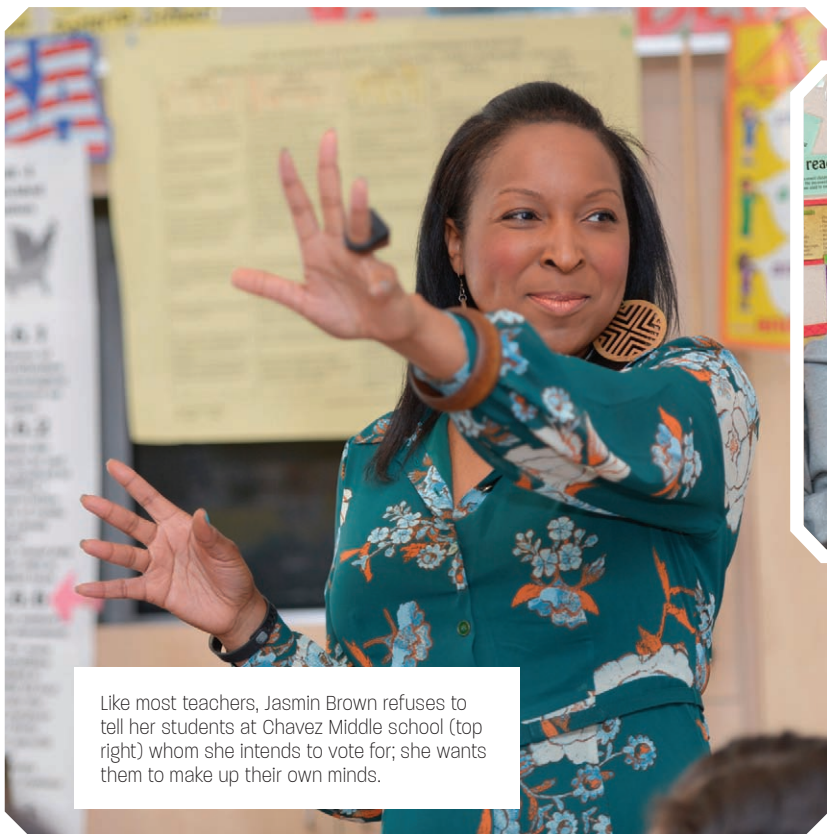
*“The election has been a circus, and everyone is paying attention — including students.”*

—DAVID KNATCAL,  
Burbank Teachers Association

The CHSSP project’s website offers invaluable information for teaching about the election, says Brown.

“We don’t use Wikipedia, because anyone can edit that material. I try to find sources I trust as an educator to bring out ‘aha!’ moments in class discussions.”

The Lynwood Teachers Association member gives kudos to her students for discussing the issues



Like most teachers, Jasmin Brown refuses to tell her students at Chavez Middle school (top right) whom she intends to vote for; she wants them to make up their own minds.



*“I try to find sources I trust to bring out ‘aha!’ moments in class. They may be young, but I want students to understand their opinion matters.”*

— JASMIN BROWN,  
Lynwood Teachers Association



Among the presidential candidates portrayed at Kennedy High’s mock debate are, from left, Jill Stein, Hillary Clinton, Jon Huntsman and Donald Trump.

respectfully. And like most teachers, she refuses to tell them whom she will vote for; she wants them to make up their own minds.

“They may be young, but I want them to understand their opinion matters.”

### **CONNECTING THE PAST WITH THE PRESENT**

“One of the things I try to impart to students is that events happening now may have already happened throughout history.”

his role as a major general who won the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812, and he was also considered crude and barbaric. Trump champions mass deportations; Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act.

Trump has called Mexican immigrants “drug dealers and rapists,” bringing to mind Gov. George Wallace’s 1968 candidacy, which also tapped into bigotry and fear. Wallace, a segregationist, was a “firebrand like Trump” and “unapologetic like Trump,” comments Gibson, who belongs to Valley of the Moon Teachers Association. (Wallace carried five states and received 10 million votes as the candidate of the American Independent Party.)

Trump’s threats of a solo campaign — and some Republicans’ attempts to dump him — inspired Gibson’s revised lesson on the split







Sonoma Valley High School history teacher Andy Gibson says students who are aware of the past can better understand the present.

*“It’s such an exciting time to be teaching history. So much is happening — and so much is yet to come.”*

—ANDY GIBSON,  
Valley of the Moon Teachers Association

of the Republican Party in 1912, when a rift developed between Conservatives, led by incumbent President William Howard Taft, and Progressives, led by former President Theodore Roosevelt. It launched Democrat Woodrow Wilson into power.

He also points out that Sen. Bernie Sanders’ run for the Oval Office is reminiscent of Sen. George McGovern’s 1972 grassroots campaign. Both embraced causes dear to young voters: Sanders vowed to clean up Wall Street, and McGovern sought to end the Vietnam War. Both were considered too leftist by the voter majority.

Gibson appreciates that students are now observing “history in the making,” with Hillary Clinton as the first female presidential nominee of a major political party. He compares that to the election of Barack Obama as the first African American president.

“It’s such an exciting time to be teaching history. So much is happening — and so much is yet to come.” ■

# 11

## tips for teaching about the election

- Hold mock debates, with students portraying candidates and creating video commercials. Afterward, hold a vote.
- Hold a debate night party for extra credit so students can watch televised debates together, with follow-up discussions.
- Host a political party fair and ask local representatives from political parties to speak and answer questions.
- Organize a voter registration drive at your high school.
- Discuss important election issues — and ask students to consider how the victory of a certain candidate might impact their own lives and society.
- Compare past political campaigns with recent election events.
- Visit NEA’s elections webpage at [nea.org/tools/lessons/64341.htm](http://nea.org/tools/lessons/64341.htm).
- Visit the California History–Social Science Project’s website at [chssp.ucdavis.edu/programs/election](http://chssp.ucdavis.edu/programs/election).
- Visit PBS NewsHour Extra, with election resources for students, at [pbs.org/newshour/extra/tag/election](http://pbs.org/newshour/extra/tag/election).
- For video clips and other resources, visit C-Span’s Road to the White House at [cspanclassroom.org/campaign-2016.aspx](http://cspanclassroom.org/campaign-2016.aspx).
- In a survey, teachers said the campaign is eliciting fear and anxiety among children of color, immigrants and Muslims; emboldening students to mimic the words and tone of the campaign; and disrupting opportunities to teach effectively about civic engagement. Resources to combat this are at [tolerance.org/election2016](http://tolerance.org/election2016).





## We Can't Go Back

This election, we must build on the progress made with our students and schools

**A** quick glance at the excellence, innovation and passion on display in schools and colleges up and down the state reveals the hard work of educators, students, parents and communities. Public education in California is rebounding as we work toward giving all students the schools they deserve.

It's an upward trajectory that was unthinkable just a few short years ago, when tens of thousands of educators received pink slips and students were thrown into turmoil as vital classes and programs were cut, schools and school libraries were shut down, and class sizes became huge and unwieldy.

Thanks to your activism and support of Proposition 30 in 2012, which stopped the education cuts and provided more than \$31 billion in new funding over the years, we're on the road to recovery. But we're not there yet, and this coming election presents us with pivotal choices for the future.

In fact, we are at a crossroads, with far-reaching consequences, and *you* play a key role in the outcome. Because parents and communities trust educators and look to you for direction on what is best for students and schools, your voice and your actions are especially influential at this crucial time.

So this election season, arm yourself with

information to help mobilize colleagues and community about the need to vote responsibly for our future, and for our students' future. The following pages provide information about the campaign and initiatives critical to education and children's well-being. Read more about CTA's support of three initiatives on the state ballot:

- **Prop. 55** — the Children's Education and Health Care Protection Act maintains higher taxes on the wealthiest Californians for 12 more years.
- **Prop. 58** — the LEARN Initiative helps students learn English quickly and expands opportunities for English speakers to learn another language.
- **Prop. 52** — the Medi-Cal Funding and Accountability Act maintains billions of dollars in federal funding to support health for low-income children and seniors.

For CTA's recommendations on the local school board races and bond measures that affect you and your students, please check out [cta.yourvoter.guide](#).

We can't go back — ever. We need to continue to build on our recent successes and solid gains in public education to ensure students' future. We must act. Our children are counting on us.

For information,  
resources, toolkits:  
[cta.org/campaign2016](http://cta.org/campaign2016)

Elections and  
voter information:  
[www.sos.ca.gov/elections](http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections)

To build your  
personalized voter guide:  
[cta.yourvoter.guide](http://cta.yourvoter.guide)







# Opening the Doors

Reopened Vacaville school demonstrates need for stable funding

By SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

**WHEN SIERRA VISTA** Elementary School in Vacaville opened its doors to students on Aug. 18, the entire community celebrated. Confetti was thrown. The media came out to take pictures. Tears were shed by staff and community members. There was a ribbon-cutting ceremony with speeches.

The fanfare was because Sierra Vista had been closed for five years due to a lack of funding. After it was shuttered, students

and their teachers were scattered to different schools throughout the district. Most believed that Sierra Vista's classrooms would never be filled with students again.

Back in 2010, when the school district faced an \$8.6 million shortfall, many things were put on the chopping block. Teachers were pink-slipped; programs were cut. But perhaps most devastating was the decision to close Sierra Vista in 2011.

Some wonder if it might have been avoided if Prop. 30 had passed just one year earlier. The ballot initiative, approved by voters in 2012, provided \$31.2 billion to California's schools. The Vacaville Unified School District received \$40.7 million in Prop. 30 funding between 2013 and 2015, according to the State Controller's Office.

"Sierra Vista was closed in 2011, and Prop. 30 was passed in 2012," says Vacaville

## Then and Now: Why We Can't Go Back

**MARCH 13, 2009**  
**PINK FRIDAY**

Steep state budget cuts during and following the Great Recession have a devastating impact on public education.

Art, music, athletic programs and more are cut; school libraries are shuttered; class sizes balloon; educators lose jobs. In



2009 alone, 28,478 RIF (reduction in force) notices are sent to California teachers, counselors and administrators.

On this statewide day of action, educators, students and communities across California protest the pink slips. "When an educator loses his or her job, the students are the ones who suffer most," says CTA President David A. Sanchez.





Facing page: Sierra Vista Elementary celebrates its reopening this year after being shut down during the recession. Left: Kathy Steiert is one of two returning teachers.

*“We never want to go back to the days of devastating cuts where school districts have to make very, very hard choices.”*

—**MOIRA McSWEENEY**,  
Vacaville Teachers Association president

Teachers Association President Moira McSweeney. “If it had passed earlier, perhaps we could have avoided closing our school and making the kinds of cuts that were devastating to families and kids.”

While there’s no way of knowing what the outcome would have been if Prop. 30 had been in effect previously, one thing is clear, says McSweeney. “We never want to go back to the days of devastating cuts where school districts have to make such very, very hard choices.”

Prop. 30 funds alone weren’t enough to reopen the school, which is now K-8. Vacaville residents had to dig deep into their pockets to pass a \$194 million school bond. Measure A, a construction bond for district schools approved by Vacaville voters in 2014, provided \$11 million to fix up Sierra Vista, which has a new multipurpose room and new science classrooms.

“Vacaville has been very fortunate and has rallied for three decades around bond measures,” says McSweeney. “But it’s time for schools to have a stable and reliable source of funding. We can’t just keep going where the pendulum swings,

making cuts and rebuilding, making cuts and rebuilding. That is extremely difficult and not cost-effective. Once you get rid of programs, it’s hard to build them back up.”

Prop. 30’s temporary income tax increase is due to expire in two years. CTA and school supporters are working hard to pass Prop. 55, which will continue to provide billions for schools without raising taxes by ensuring the wealthiest Californians continue to pay their share.

Deo Persaud, the district’s associate superintendent, is a strong supporter of Prop. 55. He believes that it’s necessary for voters to vote yes because it will provide schools with adequate funding to meet the needs of students.

“The preservation of instructional programs for our students is our highest priority,” he explains. “An extension of Prop. 30 — with Prop. 55 — positions us best to accomplish this goal. For this reason, we are in support of Prop. 55.”

For Kathy Steiert, the reopening of her beloved school was like coming home. She had taught at Sierra Vista for five years. When it closed, she was heartbroken.

“It was a very emotional and very sad time,” recalls the VTA member, who returned in August to teach second grade. “We were a very close-knit staff and school. In some ways, it was like breaking up a family.”

When she first heard the school was reopening, she didn’t know what to think. She was close to retirement and didn’t plan on changing schools again. But when she found out her principal at Callison Elementary School was relocating, she wanted to come along.

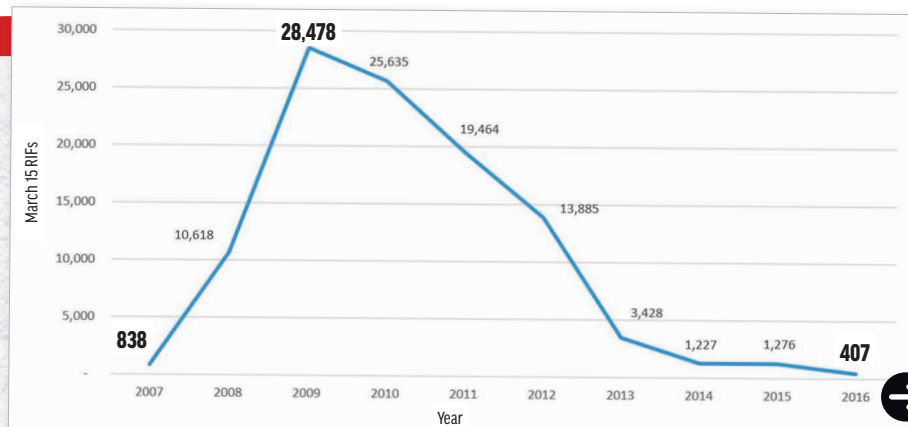
“I wanted to be a part of the reopening,” says Steiert, one of two returning teachers. “The first day of school was special. It was wonderful. Lots of people came in during weekends to prepare for it. We wanted to make the reopening perfect. Everybody was so excited.”

Steiert is also a strong proponent of Prop. 55.

“Obviously, we need stable funding. No children, parents or staff should ever have to go through the closing of a school. It’s a huge disruption for student learning. It’s awful. We need to make sure these kinds of things never happen again.”

## THE RECESSION YEARS RIFS ISSUED TO CALIFORNIA EDUCATORS

Reduction-in-force notices issued by the March 15 deadline from 2007 to 2016, showing the massive wave of pink slips during the recession and the big drop after the passage of Prop. 30 in 2012. (Figures are not necessarily the final layoff numbers, since many were rescinded.) Compiled by Amy Braden.







# Build for the Future

## YES ON PROP. 55:

### Help our students thrive

**W**e've come a long way since the dark days of the Great Recession, when draconian cuts to the education budget decimated students, educators and communities throughout the state.

We can't afford to go back — we must act now and protect our children and students. Voting yes on Proposition 55, the California Children's Education and Health Care Protection Act, prevents billions of dollars in cuts to education and health care.

Prop. 55 directs funds specifically to K-12 public education and community colleges, while also allocating funds to health care for low-income children and their families.

Prop. 55 is *not* a tax increase. It simply extends the current income tax rates on the wealthiest Californians for 12 more years — singles earning more than \$250,000 and couples earning more than \$500,000 a year. Budget forecasts show that unless we maintain this tax rate, which would continue to bring in an average of \$8 billion in annual revenues, our public schools will lose nearly \$4 billion and our state budget will face a deficit of more than \$4 billion in the first full year alone.



**MAY 9-13, 2011**

## STATE OF EMERGENCY

Lawmakers make \$12.5 billion in cuts to education, forcing schools and colleges to issue almost 20,000 RIFs to teachers by March 15. Educators declare a State of Emergency. During this week of action, CTA members and others converge on the Capitol for marches and rallies urging legislators to fund public education.

More than 30,000 educators are laid off during the recession. Even teachers who have received multiple pink slips but kept their job talk of the toll it takes. "Students see me in tears at the end of each school year, and I know that affects them emotionally," says teacher Cynthia Dalmacio. "But beyond that, I worry, like so many pink-slipped teachers do, about how I will financially support my family."



California families and students can't afford to go back.  
 Prop. 55 maintains current tax rates on the **WEALTHIEST CALIFORNIANS**  
 -- and without it, California schools could face:

## \$4 BILLION IN CUTS



Funds from Prop. 55:

- Prevent cuts to schools.
- Help lower class sizes.
- Hire new teachers.
- Help keep college affordable.
- Increase access to health care.

The proposition contains strict accountability and transparency requirements. Revenue goes to a special account not controlled by the state Legislature. Local school boards determine student needs. Local school districts identify how funds are spent and must post spending online; districts are subject to audit.

“Proposition 55 will bring stability to public education funding for 12 more years,” says CTA President Eric Heins. “We are just beginning to see programs like music, art and career-tech being offered again. We are rehiring teachers, faculty, counselors and ESPs. We are reopening school libraries and we have stopped tuition hikes.

“We can’t go to the days when we were facing layoffs, and students were facing fewer instructional days.”

Prop. 55 lets us continue to build for the future to give all students the schools they deserve. We must take action and vote — and urge our colleagues and communities to do the same.

Vote YES on Prop. 55 this November. For more information, visit [YesOn55.com](http://YesOn55.com). #Prop55 @Yeson55

## Have You Seen This? ▾



With the help of members, CTA has mounted an intensive media campaign in support of Prop. 55. A few examples:

- TV spots featuring interviews with members about making sure students get the schools and education they deserve (above). Watch them at CTA's YouTube channel [youtube.com/CaliforniaTeachers](http://youtube.com/CaliforniaTeachers)
- Social media posts at [@Yeson55](https://twitter.com/Yeson55), [#Prop55](https://twitter.com/Prop55).
- Information, resources at [Yeson55.com](http://Yeson55.com).

### Prop. 55 is supported by a broad coalition, including:

CTA, California Federation of Teachers, California School Employees Association, California State PTA, and Association of California School Administrators, as well as dozens of school boards across the state. Health care providers, community advocacy organizations, labor groups and others also support Prop. 55, including California Medical Association, California Labor Federation, Health Access California, League of Women Voters, Children's Defense Fund, and Children's Hospital Association.

**NOV. 6, 2012**

## PROP. 30

Proposition 30 is approved by voters. The initiative raises income tax on the wealthiest Californians for seven years (2012 to 2018) and increases the state sales tax by a quarter cent for four years (2013 to 2016), preventing \$6 billion in automatic spending cuts to public schools and universities. Since going into effect, Prop. 30 has provided more than \$31 billion in new revenue to public education, and brought much-needed stability to the budget.





# Language for a Global Edge

**YES ON PROP. 58:**

Help Kids LEARN

 **YesProp58 – the LEARN Initiative**

 **#YesonProp58**



**I**n today's global marketplace, knowing more than one language is an asset and can give students a competitive edge. Expanding students' access to multilingual education and allowing teachers, parents and schools more control over the curriculum is key.

Proposition 58 would do exactly that. The Language Education, Acquisition and Readiness Now (LEARN) Initiative broadens instructional methods school districts can use to teach English to English learners, while expanding opportunities for English-speaking students to learn a second language.

"Today's world is ever-changing," says CTA President Eric Heins. "With an expansion of global markets, our students must be prepared to learn, live and work in this world. This initiative ensures all kids learn English quickly and expands opportunities for students to learn a second language."

The California Department of Education reports that only 312 out of 10,393 schools currently offer multilingual programs. Extensive research has shown that students who choose to participate in multilingual programs attain high levels of academic achievement, including English and other language

## Prop 58 Quick Facts

### The Brief

Prop 58 helps students learn English as quickly as possible and expands opportunities for English speakers to master a second language.

01



### The Research

Research shows that students participating in programs taught in more than one language attain higher levels of academic achievement.

02



### The Power

Proposition 58 gives parents and school districts local control to choose the most effective instruction methods for their students.

03



### The Support

Local school boards  
Teachers  
Parents  
Employers

04



### The Action

Vote YES on Prop 58 and take action at [supportprop58.com/support](http://supportprop58.com/support)

05



proficiency. In fact, they repeatedly demonstrate greater achievement and higher scores than English-only students.

"Learning a second language helps to stimulate students' brains," says Ruby Sandoval, an Adelanto District Teachers Association member who teaches a dual immersion (English and Spanish) class to fifth- and sixth-graders.

Under our current system, too many California students are being left behind and not given the opportunity to learn English with the most effective teaching methods possible. This is because of an outdated, nearly 20-year-old law, Prop. 227, which restricts the instructional methods school districts can use to teach English. This old law also limits the ability of English-speaking students to participate in language immersion programs.



**NOV. 8, 2016**

## ENSURING OUR FUTURE

Vital services cut during the recession are just beginning to be restored. Public education, which lost more than \$50 billion in the recession, is still not at its pre-recession funding level. The sales tax increase of Prop. 30 will expire as planned at the end of this year. Proposition 55, on the Nov. 8 ballot, simply extends the current income tax rates on the wealthiest Californians for 12 years, ensuring years of stable funding for California public schools and avoiding harmful cuts.



Adelanto educator Ruby Sandoval with students in her dual immersion (English and Spanish) class at Victoria Magathan Elementary School.

Prop. 58 amends the law and removes barriers to school districts to ensure all students can learn English as quickly as possible.

“We need Prop. 58 to stop this cookie-cutter approach to education,” said Jesse Aguilar, a high school visual arts teacher and vice president of the Kern High School Teachers Association, in a televised panel discussion on KCET in early September. “Why tie the hands of educators? Why tie the hands of school districts and parents?”

Prop. 58 restores local control to schools and gives parents a bigger voice. It allows educators and districts to choose the most effective language instruction methods to help students learn, and gives parents the ability to choose a language acquisition program that best suits their child.

“All kids are different and all kids learn differently,” Aguilar said. “So there needs to be an opportunity for those kids to learn the best method that works for them.”

Some educators have noticed an even greater benefit to students learning another language. “It expands children’s understanding and acceptance of others,” says Lourdes Cassetta, Chico Unified Teachers Association member and first-grade dual immersion teacher. “It gives them perspective of what it’s like to be in a different culture.”



Jesse Aguilar

## YES ON PROP. 52:

# Keep a Good Idea Working

 [YesProp52](#)

 [#Keepthegoodidea](#)

 [bit.ly/zbVDOEf](http://bit.ly/zbVDOEf)

Proposition 52 will help ensure that kids come to school ready to learn.

Through a partnership between the state and local hospitals, California has received more than \$18 billion in federal funding to improve health care for children, seniors and working families. This arrangement, which involves hospital fees based on Medi-Cal utilization, will end in 2017 unless Prop. 52 is passed.

The partnership benefits children more than any other group in California, as they make up more than half of all Medi-Cal users. Prop. 52 will allow for federal funds to continue to support Medi-Cal, freeing up state funding to be spent on other critical programs.

Medi-Cal has played a vital role in keeping our state’s children healthy for 50 years. For their sake and for our state’s future, we must pass Prop. 52.

## TODAY — AND TOMORROW?

### PUBLIC EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA TODAY

Currently, California:

- Ranks 46th in the nation in per-pupil spending.
- Faces a severe teacher shortage. The state needs to hire more than 22,000 additional teachers this year alone.
- Still has a need for more education support professionals like library aides, bus drivers and custodians.
- Has a dwindling pipeline. In 2008, almost 45,000 people were enrolled in teacher preparation programs in California. In 2013, there were fewer than 20,000.







## How CTA Recommends Candidates

CTA's process of recommending candidates starts with you. Recommendations are made by local educators focused on what will best serve California's public education system and the needs of our students, as outlined in CTA's Advocacy Agenda ([cta.org/advocacyagenda](http://cta.org/advocacyagenda)). The basic steps:

1. Local educators conduct rigorous, in-depth interviews with candidates.
2. Local educators make recommendations to the CTA Board of Directors.
3. State Council, CTA's top governing body, votes on recommendations. Candidates must receive 60 percent or more of the vote.
4. CTA recommends candidates to members and the public. As always, these are recommendations, and the final decision belongs with you.

# Where Clinton, Harris Stand

**W**hat are Hillary Clinton's and Kamala Harris' beliefs, values and proposals on issues important to students and educators? On her website, Clinton offers proposals on K-12 education, early childhood education, college affordability, health care, and labor unions ([hillaryclinton.com/issues](http://hillaryclinton.com/issues)). Harris' website details her commitment to education, civil rights and equality for all ([kamalaharris.org/issues](http://kamalaharris.org/issues)). A few quotes:



## HILLARY CLINTON

CANDIDATE FOR U.S. PRESIDENT

### Overtesting

- "We should be ruthless in looking at tests and eliminating them if they do not actually help us move our kids forward."  
*International Business Times*, 10/24/15

### Charter Schools

- Too many charter schools "don't take the hardest-to-teach kids, or if they do, they don't keep them. And so the public schools are often in a no-win situation, because they do, thankfully, take everybody."  
*The Washington Post*, 11/8/15

### Respect for Public Schools, Educators

- "I will ensure that teachers always have a seat at the table in making decisions that impact their work."  
*U.S. News & World Report*, 10/3/15

### Worker Rights

- "Instead of respecting workers or protecting their rights, right-to-work laws depress wages and benefits, undercut unions, and concentrate power in the hands of corporations and their allies."  
[hillaryclinton.com/briefing/statements/2015/09/16/missouri-rtw](http://hillaryclinton.com/briefing/statements/2015/09/16/missouri-rtw)



## KAMALA HARRIS

CANDIDATE FOR U.S. SENATOR

### School Attendance

- Vowing to enforce state truancy laws when taking the attorney general's oath of office: "It's time to say that in the state of California, it is a crime for a child to go without an education."

### Respect for Educators

- "We need to embrace California's teachers to find and solve the problems they encounter every day, rather than having mandates imposed from the top down without input on the ground. We must ensure that our teachers have training and professional development resources in order to fill all the roles they play – from educator, to counselor, to social worker."  
Facebook, 8/4/16

### The Need to Invest in Education

- "You don't have to care about children to care about children. If you care about why you have three padlocks on your front door, if you care about why you complain about paying your taxes every year – you need to care about children."  
*Ventura County Star*, 1/23/16



# VOTER GUIDE

## CTA's recommendations for the Nov. 8 general election

**YOUR VOTE MAKES** a difference. Help elect lawmakers who will fund public schools and support all students and educators. For more information and updates, go to the CTA Campaign 2016 site at [cta.org/campaign2016](http://cta.org/campaign2016). You can also go to [cta.yourvoter.guide](http://cta.yourvoter.guide), enter your address, and view your personalized voter guide.

### BALLOT INITIATIVES

#### YES ON PROP. 55

The Children's Education and Health Care Protection Act

#### YES ON PROP. 58

The LEARN Initiative (Language Education, Acquisition and Readiness Now)

#### YES ON PROP. 52

Medi-Cal Funding and Accountability Act

#### U.S. President

Hillary Clinton/D

#### U.S. Senate

Kamala Harris/D

#### State Assembly

**AD 01** Brian Dahle/R  
**AD 02** Jim Wood/D  
**AD 04** Cecilia Aguiar-Curry/D  
**AD 07** Kevin McCarty/D  
**AD 08** Ken Cooley/D  
**AD 09** Jim Cooper/D  
**AD 13** Susan Talamantes Eggman/D  
**AD 14** Mae Torlakson/D  
**AD 15** Tony Thurmond/D  
**AD 16** Cheryl Cook-Kallio/D  
**AD 17** David Chiu/D  
**AD 18** Rob Bonta/D  
**AD 19** Philip Ting/D  
**AD 20** Bill Quirk/D  
**AD 21** Adam Gray/D  
**AD 22** Kevin Mullin/D  
**AD 24** Vicki Veenker/D  
**AD 25** Kansen Chu/D  
**AD 27** Ash Kalra/D  
**AD 28** Evan Low/D  
**AD 29** Mark Stone/D  
**AD 31** Joaquin Arambula/D  
**AD 32** Rudy Salas/D  
**AD 33** Jay Obernolte/R  
**AD 35** Jordan Cunningham/R  
**AD 37** Monique Limón/D  
**AD 38** Christy Smith/D  
**AD 39** Patty López/D  
**AD 40** Abigail Medina/D  
**AD 41** Chris Holden/D  
**AD 42** Greg Rodriguez/D  
**AD 43** Ardy Kassakhian/D  
**AD 44** Jacqui Irwin/D  
**AD 45** Matthew Dababneh/D

**AD 46** Adrin Nazarian/D  
**AD 49** Ed Chau/D  
**AD 51** Jimmy Gomez/D  
**AD 52** Freddie Rodriguez/D  
**AD 53** Miguel Santiago/D  
**AD 56** Eduardo Garcia/D  
**AD 57** Ian Calderon/D  
**AD 58** Cristina Garcia/D  
**AD 59** Reginald Jones-Sawyer/D  
**AD 60** Eric Linder/R  
**AD 61** Jose Medina/D  
**AD 62** Autumn Burke/D  
**AD 63** Anthony Rendon/D  
**AD 64** Mike Gipson/D  
**AD 65** Sharon Quirk-Silva/D  
**AD 66** Al Muratsuchi/D  
**AD 70** Patrick O'Donnell/D  
**AD 78** Todd Gloria/D  
**AD 80** Lorena Gonzalez/D

#### State Senate

**SD 01** Robert Rowen/D  
**SD 05** Cathleen Galgiani/D  
**SD 09** Sandrē Swanson/D  
**SD 11** Jane Kim/D  
**SD 15** Jim Beall/D  
**SD 17** William Monning/D  
**SD 19** Hannah-Beth Jackson/D  
**SD 21** Johnathon Ervin/D  
**SD 25** Anthony Portantino/D  
**SD 27** Henry Stern/D  
**SD 29** Josh Newman/D  
**SD 31** Richard Roth/D  
**SD 33** Ricardo Lara/D  
**SD 39** Toni Atkins/D

#### U.S. House of Representatives

**CD 01** Jim Reed/D  
**CD 02** Jared Huffman/D  
**CD 03** John Garamendi/D  
**CD 04** Robert Derlet/D

**CD 05** Mike Thompson/D  
**CD 06** Doris O. Matsui/D  
**CD 07** Ami Bera/D  
**CD 08** Paul Cook/R  
**CD 09** Jerry McNerney/D  
**CD 10** Jeff Denham/R  
**CD 11** Mark DeSaulnier/D  
**CD 12** Nancy Pelosi/D  
**CD 13** Barbara Lee/D  
**CD 14** Jackie Speier/D  
**CD 15** Eric Swalwell/D  
**CD 16** Jim Costa/D  
**CD 17** Michael M. Honda/D  
**CD 18** Anna G. Eshoo/D  
**CD 20** Jimmy Panetta/D  
**CD 21** David F. Valadao/R  
**CD 24** Salud Carbajal/D  
**CD 25** Bryan Caforio/D  
**CD 26** Julia Brownley/D  
**CD 27** Judy Chu/D  
**CD 28** Adam B. Schiff/D  
**CD 29** Tony Cárdenas/D  
**CD 30** Brad Sherman/D  
**CD 31** Pete Aguilar/D  
**CD 32** Grace F. Napolitano/D  
**CD 33** Ted Lieu/D  
**CD 34** Xavier Becerra/D  
**CD 35** Norma Torres/D  
**CD 36** Raul Ruiz/D  
**CD 37** Karen Bass/D  
**CD 38** Linda Sánchez/D  
**CD 40** Lucille Roybal-Allard/D  
**CD 41** Mark Takano/D  
**CD 42** Tim Sheridan/D  
**CD 43** Maxine Waters/D  
**CD 44** Isadore Hall III/D  
**CD 47** Alan S. Lowenthal/D  
**CD 49** Doug Applegate/D  
**CD 51** Juan Vargas/D  
**CD 52** Scott Peters/D



## Charter Fraud

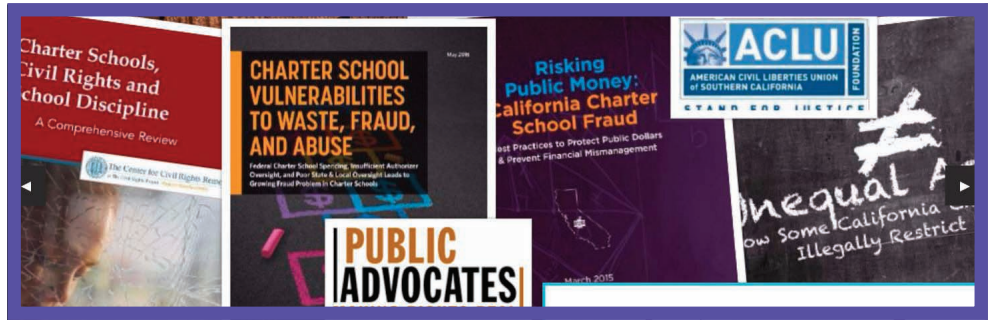
In July, Attorney General Kamala Harris announced a \$168.5 million settlement with charter school operator K12 Inc. about the company's "false claims, false advertising and unfair competition laws" misleading parents about students' academic progress, college eligibility, class sizes and other issues. The settlement came after K12 educators raised concerns about the schools failing their students last December, and after an exposé in the *San Jose Mercury News* earlier this year criticized K12 and its schools for siphoning more than \$310 million in public education funding from California over the past 12 years.

Other reports detailing charter school wrongdoing:

- State regulators found more than \$81 million in fraudulent and wasteful spending at charter schools around California.
- The American Civil Liberties Union discovered that some California charters illegally restrict enrollment.
- The UCLA Civil Rights Project found students are being unfairly disciplined and discriminated against for the sole purpose of profiting off kids.
- In the Public Interest revealed extreme fraud and waste of taxpayer dollars.
- The Center for Popular Democracy warned that fraud in charters is a national problem.

Read these reports and more at

[kidsnotprofits.com](http://kidsnotprofits.com)



# Kids, Not Profits

Telling the story of the billionaires with a coordinated agenda for our schools

**MAYNARD BROWN** has taught at Crenshaw High School in South Los Angeles for 26 years. With his business magnet, the United Teachers Los Angeles member has helped countless students get into college. Part of his curriculum involves students creating their own business plans based on needs assessments of their neighborhoods. Many students have started their own successful businesses off those plans.



Maynard Brown

During this same time, enrollment at Crenshaw has gone from more than 3,000 students to fewer than 1,000 today, as multiple charter schools have opened nearby. Since school funding is based on enrollment, when a student leaves a district school, the money goes too, leaving the school with less resources, year after year.

In fact, backed by a group of billionaires with their own agenda for public education, a new industry around charter schools is growing in California that is siphoning students and funding from public education. Their agenda:

- Divert money out of California's neighborhood public schools to fund privately run charter schools, without accountability or transparency to parents and taxpayers.
- Cherry-pick the students who get to

attend charter schools, weeding out and turning down students with special needs.

- Spend millions trying to influence local school board and legislative elections across California.

Charter schools, taxpayer-funded public schools that are frequently operated by private companies and receive billions in California taxpayer dollars every year, are not subject to the same standards of accountability and transparency as traditional public schools. They're able to ignore requirements to enroll all students from the community, often turning down students with special needs. One of these charters is co-located on Brown's campus, using classrooms that should be for students who attend Crenshaw.

"Is it fair that charter schools continue

to expand at the expense of our children who choose to remain in public schools?” asks Brown.

Taxpayers currently pay more than \$3 billion annually to fund about 1,200 charters in the state. Evidence shows that charters’ lack of accountability has led to financial gains for their private operators, and has too often been disastrous for thousands of California students.

## Taking Action

Now, these billionaire backers are spending millions of dollars trying to influence local school board and legislative elections across the state.

Educators and CTA have launched the Kids Not Profits campaign to bring awareness of the private charter industry, the people behind it, and what parents and educators can do to take action.

Kids Not Profits draws attention to the need for more accountability and transparency for California charter schools and helps expose the coordinated agenda by these billionaires.

“Our students are counting on all of us in the community to provide them with the quality public education they need and deserve,” says CTA President Eric Heins. “We can’t allow a group of billionaires to push their profit-driven agenda on our kids, and we can’t allow them to hijack elections to divert even more public money away from our neighborhood public schools.”

**KidsNotProfits.com** has eye-opening resources and data about the wealthy charter school profiteers who have given millions in recent political donations. The list includes Eli Broad, whose secret plan to remove half of the students from Los Angeles’ neighborhood public schools like Crenshaw High and place them in unaccountable charters was unmasked last

year by the *Los Angeles Times*; the Walton family; Netflix CEO Reed Hastings; The Gap co-founder Doris Fisher; and others.

## Funding an Agenda

Broad has donated more than \$1.35 million to the California Charter School Association (CCSA), a lobbying arm of the charter school industry, which hopes to put 1 million children in charters by 2022. In the 2016 primary election, backers of CCSA spent more than \$11 million on candidates in California. Their goal is to elect state lawmakers and county and local school board

members who share their agenda and can approve new charter schools.

In addition, Broad and fellow billionaires actively engage PR firms to sway public opinion and own major shares in

media companies, including The 74, which owns the LA School Report website.

“Public schools should be about students and inspiring young minds — not profits,” Heins says. “It’s time to hold charter schools and their private operators accountable to some of the same standards as traditional public schools.”

As funding for staff, materials and professional development dwindles, Maynard Brown has seen class size ratios rise to as much as 45 to 1. He feels strongly that instead of subsidizing corporate charter schools with taxpayer dollars, we should be using the money to strengthen our neighborhood public schools for all California children.

“Quality education in inner-city public schools levels the playing field in society, and allows all of our young people to believe in and achieve their dreams,” Brown says. ■

*United Teachers Los Angeles contributed to this report.*

## Charter Legislation

CTA co-sponsored legislation this year to ensure equal access for all students, and to ensure fiscal transparency and accountability at all charter schools. California lawmakers approved Assembly Bill 709, which requires charter schools to disclose how they spend taxpayer money, prohibits charter school board members and their families from profiting from their schools, and ensures that charter schools comply with California’s open meetings and open records laws. This bill is now on the governor’s desk. Tell the governor to sign AB 709 at [kidsnotprofits.com](http://kidsnotprofits.com).

SB 322 would have ended the practice of charters cherry-picking students to help boost the perception of academic success, eliminating their ability to limit enrollment for students with disabilities, low-academic performers, English learners, and students who are economically disadvantaged. However, SB 322 failed on the Assembly floor.

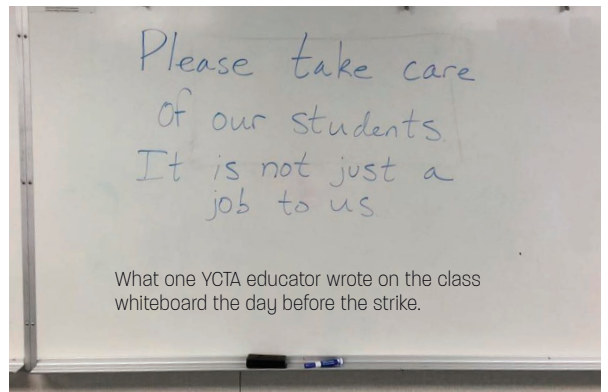
## To Find Out More

Learn more about Kids Not Profits and the privately managed charter school industry at [kidsnotprofits.com](http://kidsnotprofits.com) and [#kidsnotprofits](https://twitter.com/kidsnotprofits)



# Bargaining Roundup

Details of these stories at [cta.org/bargainingupdates](http://cta.org/bargainingupdates)



## ▲ Yuba City Teachers Strike

Members of the Yuba City Teachers Association (YCTA) went on strike Sept. 8 after enduring months of disrespect during contract negotiations with the Yuba City Unified School District (YCUSD) in Sutter County.

Get updates at [ycta.net](http://ycta.net)

The California Public Employment Relations Board issued a legal complaint against YCUSD in late August alleging that the district violated state law when it adopted a series of board resolutions during the summer that threatened to discipline employees who exercise their legally protected right to strike.

"These resolutions are the latest example of the district's disregard and disrespect for the hardworking teachers who devote themselves to educating our community's children," says YCTA President Dina Luetgens. "Teachers always have been and still are ready and willing to negotiate. It's time for the Yuba City school board to stop browbeating teachers, to stop disrespecting students and parents, and to stop engaging in deception and intimidation around negotiations."

The contract dispute stems from the district's refusal of the teachers' proposal for competitive salaries that

will attract and retain qualified, quality teachers. YCTA points out that the district pays teachers 13 percent below the state average, while it pays administrators well above the state average. Though it is financially healthy, the district started this school year with 40 unfilled teaching positions.

"Teacher turnover — to say nothing of unfilled vacancies — hurts students," says Luetgens. "The district is perfectly able to afford salaries that attract and retain quality teachers — it just doesn't want to. I find it astounding that the district's priorities are so skewed. There is no more important expenditure than investing in a qualified, stable team of teachers to educate our students."

# Teachers See the Possibilities

Whether studying cell membranes or the scientific method, students in Leslie Sandoval's seventh-grade class make connections—to the curriculum, with their teacher and peers, and to the world around them.



Lone Hill Middle School, Third Period, Life Sciences, Teacher: Leslie Sandoval, M.A.Ed. '04

## Stockton Teachers Fight for Students

On Sept. 8, members of the Stockton Teachers Association (STA) voted 97.2 percent to authorize their executive board to call a strike as necessary to stop the mismanagement and wrongheaded prioritization that are harming Stockton Unified School District (SUSD) students.

The 1,800-member STA has been battling since June 2015 to get SUSD to make the classroom and students the top priority. SUSD has received millions of dollars in Local Control Funding Formula funds aimed at helping its students, 90 percent of whom are categorized as "high poverty."

STA says SUSD should use these funds to attract and retain quality educators for every classroom, reduce class sizes, and support student needs.

Instead, SUSD attached its contract offer to 30 more instructional minutes four days a week. STA says students and teachers do not need longer school days – in fact, the extra minutes are dangerous, since many students have long commutes and would be walking or traveling home in the dark. The district is offering a 0 (zero) percent salary increase.

"Our students are being harmed by this management malfeasance," says STA President Erich Myers. "Despite receiving millions in new state funding aimed at helping our neediest students, the district is refusing to use any of that funding to support high-quality teaching. Worse yet, district management has robbed our students by squirreling away dollars intended for the classroom in what is now an obscenely large reserve fund."

## West Sacramento Teachers at Impasse

After 11 months of frustrating bargaining to halt teacher turnover and increase compensation, Washington Teachers Association (WTA) members in West Sacramento are awaiting a neutral fact finder's report that might help defuse a simmering showdown.

"People are frustrated," says Don Stauffer, president of the 425-member WTA. "It's at the point where relationships with the district are being damaged."

Washington Unified School District in Yolo County offered only a 2 percent raise for the 2015-16 school year, when it enjoyed a 14 percent state funding increase. That year, 15 percent of teachers left the district, most seeking better pay nearby. The union is seeking 7 percent in raises over two years, Stauffer says.

Get updates at [wtateachers.org](http://wtateachers.org).

By Len Feldman, Cynthia Menzel and Mike Myslinski.  
#OurVoiceAtTheTable

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## What You Did Last Summer

Travel and training make for inspired educators

By SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

**IN OUR AUGUST ISSUE,** we featured winners of our *Educators Are Everywhere* contest, in which CTA members traveled far and wide with *California Educator* magazines and sent us photos to prove it. We couldn't award prizes to everyone, but we'd like to showcase others who sent us photos of their adventures.

### ◀ Fulfilling a Dream

**ALIZA WINE**

**Vista Middle School special education teacher**

UNITED TEACHERS LOS ANGELES

I made it to Spain — a trip I have wanted to do for 40 years! Here I'm in front of the ancient city of Toledo. I studied flamenco dance as a young person and also Spanish history, so I have been interested in Spain for many years. I am particularly fascinated by the mix of cultures, Arab, Christian and Jewish, as reflected in the music and the architecture of the old synagogues and mosques that were converted into churches. I am currently fascinated by the Spanish Civil War era and read several books in preparation for my trip. I also got introduced to the Catalan language and culture in Barcelona! The combination of cultures and music is what I will share with my students.



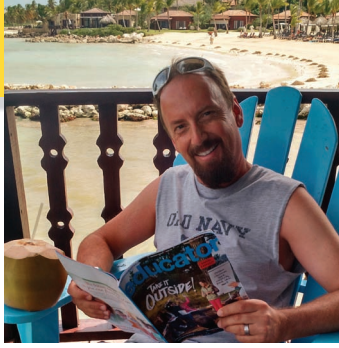
### ▲ Climbing a Glacier

**REBECCA SOUTHWICK**

**Pioneer Middle School science teacher**

PORTERVILLE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Here I am after climbing a glacier in Iceland. When I got to the highest point of the climb, I looked down and saw the enormous chunk of ice surrounding me. It was totally exhilarating. I felt as if I could conquer the world. I was one of five science teachers, including my husband, who took high school students on a trip to Iceland through World Strides Tours. I'll remember it for the rest of my life. I'm still drawing inspiration from that glacier climb.



## Chillin' in the Dominican ▲

**CHRISTOPHER POPE**

**Annie Mitchell Elementary School teacher**  
VISALIA UNIFIED TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

My wife and I decided to visit Punta Cana for our wedding anniversary. The Dominican is famous for pristine white beaches and tropical weather. We wanted a sanctuary, and Punta Cana exceeded our expectations. As an educator, I know how important it is to have some time in the summer to relax. During the school year we give and give, and if we don't take some time for ourselves, when the school year starts we are depleted and have nothing to offer our students. This year I have a new exciting discovery to share: My wife and I hiked into a cave with a huge lake. The chemical makeup of the water made it easy to float. What a great research project!



## Celebrating 60 in Style

**MARYANN VOLMERT**

**Royal Oaks Elementary School teacher**  
DUARTE UNIFIED EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

In celebration of my 60th year of life being completed, I finally had the opportunity and money saved to go to Europe. Here I am in Boppard, Germany, at a fortification built during the Roman occupation of western Germany. I was so amazed that things this old survive.

## Journeying for Journalism ▼

**JOYCE FEUERBORN (LEFT)**

**Godinez High School journalism/  
English teacher**

SANTA ANA EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

**LISA GERSBACHER**

**El Camino Real High School  
science teacher**

ASSOCIATION OF PLACENTIA-LINDA  
EDUCATORS



Joyce: We're at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas at the end of a self-guided food tour. I went to Vegas to attend the Journalism Education Association Advisers Institute and get some assistance with implementing an online newspaper at my school. It was so fun! The conference was a sellout with 150 journalism advisers from across the country attending.



## Attending Freshman Orientation

**ELSA CLARK**

**Philadelphia Elementary School teacher**  
ASSOCIATED POMONA TEACHERS

I am next to a hippopotamus – one of the school's mascots – at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., for my son's freshman orientation. It was exciting to see 500 other teenagers eager to start their university life. I prepared a PowerPoint from my trip to show students the possibility of where they could attend college.

## Checking Out a 'Ghost' of a Town ▶

**MICHAEL McQUADE**

**Wilcox High School science teacher**

UNITED TEACHERS OF SANTA CLARA

Visiting the ghost town of Bodie, an original mining town from the late 1800s. What's left today stands in a state of arrested decay and is maintained by the California State Parks System, which took over the town in 1962 to make it a State Historic Park.







## Exploring Incan Ruins ▲

**JOYE CANTRELL**

Rialto High School hospitality and tourism teacher

RIALTO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Enjoying Machu Picchu, Peru, with Peruvian guide Marily from Andean Treks. She was our educator for five days. We learned about the flora and fauna of the region, its diverse culture and its history. Being able to hike and camp in the Andes, visit various Incan ruins, and enjoy the company of our Peruvian team was an amazing experience.



## Rooting for Her All-Star ▲

**MONICA LOCKWOOD**

West View Early Learning Center teacher

SOUTHWEST TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

My *Educator* magazine kept me company and gave my son good luck. My son James, a third baseman, pitcher and incoming seventh-grader, played in the La Mesa National Little League All-Star Game for 11- and 12-year-olds. This photo was taken shortly after the team had just won their semifinal, but they lost the next game. Maybe it's because I didn't bring my lucky magazine.



## ◀ Touring Central Europe

**MICHELE PASKOW**

CSU Northridge Jewish studies professor

CALIFORNIA FACULTY ASSOCIATION

I'm on the Chain Bridge, which spans the Danube River in Budapest, Hungary. I was on a tour of central Europe, also visiting Vienna, Prague and Berlin. I took a lot of pictures to show my students. Seeing the Danube gave me a greater understanding of how it enabled expansion and trade through the Middle Ages. I'll share stories I heard about how the country has changed and blossomed since the fall of Nazism and communism. I visited the famous Dohány Street Synagogue (Europe's largest), and saw the Raoul Wallenberg Holocaust Memorial. I also met people learning about their Jewish roots, descendants of Holocaust survivors and the Communist era.

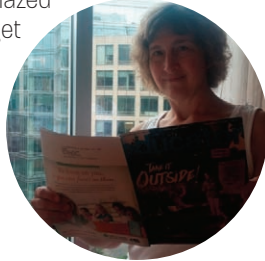
## Reading CTA at the NEA RA in DC

**SAMANTHA WILLIAMS**

**Williams Middle School leadership teacher**

TRACY EDUCATORS ASSOCIATION

Brought my *California Educator* to the NEA Representative Assembly in Washington, D.C. It was my seventh RA. I'm always amazed that people can actually get up and speak and be on the big screen. I'm not sure I could ever do that.



## Revisiting a Sad Chapter in History

**TONYA McQUADE**

**Los Gatos High School English teacher**

LOS GATOS-SARATOGA UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

My husband Michael and I took a road trip along Highway 395 in the Eastern Sierra. I had wanted to see Manzanar (a Japanese internment camp) for years, and it was a very powerful and emotional experience. In the past, I taught my juniors in American literature about Manzanar and had them read the chapter from *Farewell to Manzanar* titled "Free to Go" as part of our unit on World War II/Vietnam literature. It is so important for students to know this history, especially considering the way various groups have been targeted in our country recently. We need to be sure something like this does not happen again. I found the exhibits very informative and took lots of pictures to use in a PowerPoint to explain the history of the internment camps. I will also examine more recent examples from the news as we consider ongoing issues of hatred and prejudice.



## Hanging with the King

**JACKIE JONES**

**107th Street Elementary School fifth-grade teacher**

UNITED TEACHERS LOS ANGELES

I went to Hawaii with my three sisters for a family vacation. Here I am in Honolulu, in front of King Kamehameha. I've always seen that statue on the TV show *Hawaii 5-0* in the opening credits and have wondered about the importance of it. I learned King Kamehameha was the great Hawaiian Warrior-King who united the Hawaiian Islands. This will be a good social studies lesson to teach my students about courage, determination and bravery.

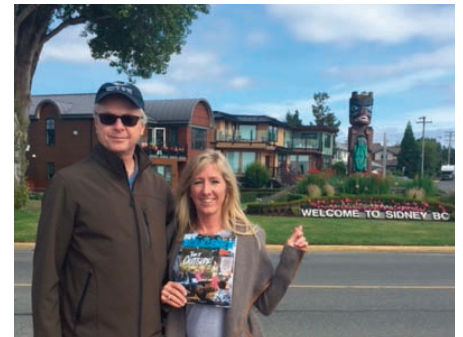
## Visiting Canada, eh?

**HEIDI SCHUMAKER**

**Murrieta High School teacher resource specialist**

MURRIETA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

My boyfriend, Kirby Cramer, and I started our trip in Seattle and went on to Victoria and British Columbia. When we went to places with beautiful scenery, I forgot to bring my magazine. Finally, I remembered to bring it in Sidney, B.C., which is very quaint and cute. I took a million pictures for my students, and we will talk about currency, exchanging money, and different ways of travel, because we took ferries and rode on a seaplane from Seattle to Victoria. I will also show them pictures of Mount Rainier.





# 5

## Ways Twitter Can Help Build Your PLN



By [@samdemuro](#)

**TWITTER IS AN EXCELLENT TOOL** for educators, whether you use it in the classroom, to participate in a national conversation, or to develop your personal learning network (PLN). Experts say that increasing your “Twitteracy” (Twitter literacy) is vital to connect with students in the 21st century.

Regarding your PLN, Twitter creates opportunities to connect with fellow educators (across the world!), exchange resources, ask questions, see examples, get lesson ideas, and learn about professional development opportunities. Educators are some of the best tweeters out there, so if you’re not on Twitter already, join the 320 million users and see what you’ve been missing. A few tips:



Recent activity on the [#EdChat](#) hashtag.

### Create a rock star Twitter bio with a photo

A Twitter user takes a few seconds to decide whether or not to follow someone. Grow your followers and meet users with similar interests with a bio that says who you are, what you’re interested in, what you do, and something quirky and fun about you. Think of your Twitter bio as your “elevator pitch.”

### Follow interesting people and organizations

Unlike Facebook, where you usually know the person you’re “friending,” you don’t have to know someone to follow them on Twitter. By following other educators and organizations you’re passionate about, you send a message to others about your interests. If you like a particular tweet, reply or retweet to start building relationships.

### Participate in a Twitter chat

Twitter chats are online conversations, usually moderated by one or two users, centered around a hashtag at a particular time and date. The moderator often poses questions, such as “How do you use social media in the classroom?” and users tweet their answers using a designated hashtag like [#SMedu](#) (shorthand for topics related to social media in education). Other popular education Twitter chats: [#CAEdChat](#) [#EdChat](#) [#EdFutures](#) [#NTchat](#).

### Use Twitter at conferences

Twitter is the ideal tool for meeting new people and documenting your experience at professional conferences. Most conferences and events have a hashtag, usually located on the conference program or on signs throughout the space. At CTA’s recent Summer Institute, attendees used [#CTASI16](#) to tweet photos and tidbits of information, and followed one another. Many people are tweet-friends first before meeting in person.

### Build your own personal brand

Twitter is an opportunity to share your expertise and experience. You can share tips, lesson plans, causes you care about, graphics, and more. If you are active on Twitter and create quality content, you’re likely to see your follower count grow. Check out [cta.org/social](http://cta.org/social) for additional resources.



Left, Chris Stanley and students at the lake; below, on a Friends of Rollo trip, Stanley's students go out on their own chartered boat.



## The Reel Thing

Chris Stanley brings a passion for fishing to his students

Chris Stanley wanted his students to have the same experience he did when he went fishing as a kid. So he started bringing his fourth-grade students and chaperones up to Lake Cuyamaca in the mountains outside of San Diego once a year.

Some 22 years later, Stanley, a member of the Santee Teachers Association, reckons he's taken upwards of 3,000 kids on various fishing trips.

Stanley, who now teaches seventh- and eighth-grade language arts, history and PE at Carlton Hills School in Santee, explains his passion to bring fishing to young people. "Adults have the ability to unpack emotional baggage," he says. "Kids don't have those opportunities. With fishing they can forget about everything, feel rejuvenated, get outside of Santee — see outside of whatever they're in."

Every year on the Friday before Memorial Day, Stanley takes the school's fourth-graders and a special ed class to the lake. He's now joined by former students who come back to help. Last school year, 110 students participated and paid about \$3 each. The PTA or Associated Student Body usually pays for busing, tackle is donated, and kids use Stanley's collection of rods and reels. The Department of Fish and Wildlife stocks extra trout in the lake beforehand.

"After the trip, we fillet all the fish and send them home with the kids," Stanley says.

"It's a fun age," he adds, explaining his focus on 9- and 10-year-olds. "They go from that smaller class size to the larger class size. They have more responsibilities and more stress."

Stanley has worked with the nonprofit Friends of Rollo for the past 12 years, taking 40 13-year-old students with GPAs of 3.5 or better for a half day of fishing in the ocean.

In addition, Stanley runs a boys' group at school that includes a range of students, from excellent to those who are struggling or need an extra push. He works with San Diego Sportfishing to take five Saturday trips with six of these students every year. "The boys from the group who have the GPA and good behavior get this free trip that is covered by the club," he says. "I just have to chaperone and play the personal deckhand for the kids."

Stanley says these fishing trips, just like teaching, have changed his life. (He also says that educators saved his life — literally. When he was in third grade, his school came under attack by a 16-year-old shooter. Stanley witnessed his principal shot dead after the man told him and others to run. Another teacher saw Stanley running in the wrong direction and called him back.)

"Teaching is like fishing," Stanley said in an interview prior to being named a San Diego County Teacher of the Year in 2007. "There are no bad days, just days that are more challenging, days that test your limits more than others."

—Katharine Fong





Howe Elementary site rep Steve Acosta, left, talks with school secretary Anissa McCullen.

# Site Reps AT YOUR SERVICE

Unsung heroes working to protect your rights

By SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN  
Photos by SCOTT BUSCHMAN

*Are the extra duties you've been assigned in violation of your union contract?  
Is your district paying you according to the right step of the pay scale?  
If your principal requests a meeting that could result in disciplinary action, what should you do?*

**T**he answer to all these questions: Talk to your site rep. For those new to the profession, your site rep is your union representative on campus. In addition to working their own full-time jobs, site reps spend time — voluntarily — defending your rights, monitoring and enforcing the contract, advocating to improve your working conditions, and conveying your concerns to chapter leadership.

Site reps are the first line of defense when a bargaining unit member has a problem with an administrator. They try to resolve issues before they turn into grievances. But if that's not possible, they investigate and take their findings

to the chapter's grievance committee for consideration.

Site reps do not get involved in disputes among colleagues — and for the record, bargaining members can't file grievances against each other. It's the administrator's job to deal with staff conflicts.

On a more pleasant note, site reps sign up new members, run elections, maintain the association's on-campus bulletin board, and answer questions about the union contract. They may also organize phone and email trees and social media communication, distribute union materials, and help involve future leaders in the association.

Let's meet a few of these unsung heroes.



## MIKE GODOY

Alamitos Intermediate School history teacher

GARDEN GROVE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

As a probationary teacher 23 years ago, he got the runaround when he asked administrators about being given a contract. Then his site rep intervened, and he signed his first contract two days later. He promised her that he would become a site rep someday to pay it forward. Fifteen years later, in 2008, he kept his promise.

Godoy and other GGEA reps meet with administrators regularly, not just when problems arise. It creates a “less contentious” school environment, he says. A benefit of constant communication is that administrators often approach site reps first to seek their opinions if they have concerns about something or want to make changes. It’s definitely a sign of respect, says Godoy.

### The most important quality of a good site rep is...

trust. People need to know that you will keep their information confidential. You have their back.

### The best thing about being a site rep is...

being there for others. It’s an opportunity to give back and protect what we have for future generations of educators.



## What does a site rep do?

- Supports and defends members’ rights.
- Strives to improve working conditions.
- Monitors and enforces the contract.
- Represents members in meetings that could lead to disciplinary actions.
- Runs elections/surveys for association.
- Maintains the association’s bulletin board on campus.
- Presents views of colleagues to union leadership.
- Serves as a site organizer by communicating information in person or electronically.

## STEVE ACOSTA

Howe Elementary School technology tech

ASSOCIATION OF CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEES, CULVER CITY

*Trustworthiness. Respect. Responsibility. Fairness. Caring. Citizenship.* These words, emblazoned on the school’s mural, also describe the qualities Acosta has brought to the table as a site rep for education support professionals since 2008.

“I care about the students here, but I also care about employees,” he says. “Improving working conditions for staff allows them to do a better job, which also helps students.”

Classified folks are sometimes a bit shy when it comes to standing up for themselves, says Acosta. So he encourages them to speak out. “Our voice is important,” he says. “And through CTA and involvement in our association, we can make our voices heard.”

### I am proud...

to provide members with tools to feel empowered. Whether employees are seeking a job reclassification or feel that too many extra duties have been piled on, I help them stand up for themselves.

### The best thing about being a site rep is...

that I have grown as a professional. I have learned so much. I feel as though I’m making a difference.





## **KATHERINE GIBSON**

**Greenleaf Elementary School teacher**  
OAKLAND EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Gibson knows she is often the face of the union for those who are new to the profession or district. Her warm smile and welcoming spirit convey the message “You are not alone.”

Being a site rep is all about communication, she says, including sending email blasts and talking to members about important issues in the district, community and state. She raised awareness among colleagues of the plan to transport coal through Oakland, which could have endangered residents. Eventually the city vetoed the plan.

Being a “people person,” Gibson loves socializing with colleagues at monthly meetings, recruiting new members into the association, and encouraging members to become more active. Sometimes it takes a pizza party, but that’s all part of the fun.

### **A good site rep is...**

someone who’s a good listener. Someone who knows what they’re talking about. And someone — even if they don’t know what they’re talking about — who finds out the correct information.

### **Being a site rep is...**

a lot of work. But members at our school are supportive and appreciative that I try to accommodate everybody.



Photo credit: Kim Sanford

## **GREG YOUNG**

**San Clemente High School physics/chemistry teacher**  
CAPISTRANO UNIFIED EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The first year he was a site rep, his chapter went on strike. He discovered he was good at organizing rallies and communicating important issues to his fellow chapter members. It was an emotional time, he says, recalling the 2010 three-day walkout. When it ended, he helped with the healing process. He helped people see that for the sake of students, it was time to put differences aside and move forward.

It became a stepping stone to higher union involvement. He is now on his chapter’s bargaining team and executive board. But he’s still a site rep, because he loves being involved in his local school community.

### **It’s important for site reps to differentiate between...**

constructive criticism by an administrator and harassment. Site reps must also differentiate between reasonable requests and unreasonable ones.

### **An effective site rep...**

has the respect of both colleagues and administrators. You need a good relationship with both sides so you can broker a peace deal. But you never forget that your job is advocating for your members.





## KRISTINE CLARK

Willow Elementary School special education paraprofessional

LAS VIRGENES CLASSIFIED ASSOCIATION

She found that one of the perks of being a site rep was helping select a new principal at her school. Clark served on a panel of 11 employees who narrowed the pool to just four candidates. She felt honored to be part of the selection process.

Being a site rep also involves intervening during disagreements between staff and administrators. Working with students with disabilities has given her the skill set to defuse difficult situations.

“Sometimes you just have to help people to calm down, sit back and listen. Sometimes people go on the defensive, and you try to help them to think clearly.”

### I have made a difference...

by making the school safer, especially for special education staff. I was instrumental in getting locks on the gates and signage to keep the gates closed at all times and letting staff use walkie-talkies for emergencies.

### When you become a site rep...

you become more involved not only with your job, but with your community of co-workers. You have a say. You can make changes. You have a stronger voice. I advise anyone to consider becoming a rep at their school.



## PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS?

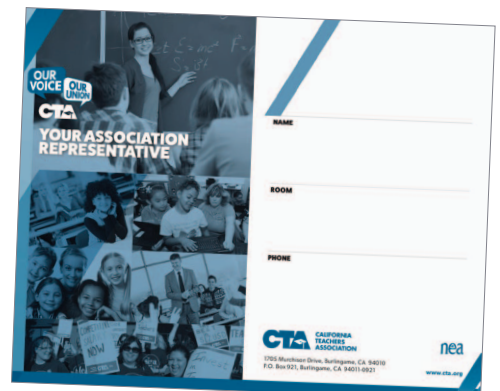
Are you a site rep? What's your experience, your opinion about your role? Why do you do it? Tell us at [editor@cta.org](mailto:editor@cta.org) or [@WeAreCTA](https://www.facebook.com/WeAreCTA).



## Know Your Weingarten Rights

**IMPORTANT:** If you are called into a meeting by an administrator that might lead to disciplinary action, contact your site rep *immediately*. Under the Weingarten rule, union employees have the right to the presence of a union representative at a meeting where there is a reasonable expectation that discipline may result. The employee must request representation, or the right is waived.

Look for this site rep sign at your school.





## About CalSTRS

The California State Teachers' Retirement System was established in 1913 to provide retirement, disability and survivor benefits to public school educators from pre-K through community college. It is an independent state agency headed by an independent teacher-majority board, and administered by an executive officer not subject to political control.

CalSTRS is the largest educator-only pension fund in the world, and the second-largest pension fund in the U.S. The market value of its investment portfolio was \$193.4 billion as of July 31, 2016.

Unlike most workers, teachers in California do not earn any Social Security benefits, and teachers who previously worked in the private sector often see their Social Security benefits reduced or eliminated from federal Social Security offsets, despite the fact that they paid into the Social Security system.

Teachers' retirement benefits, secured over nearly three decades of service, replace about 62 percent of their working income. As such, the CalSTRS pension is the only source of reliable monthly income a retired teacher receives. In addition, most public school educators in the state retire without employer-sponsored health care after age 65.

CTA believes all Californians should have a safe and secure retirement system. The problem is not that teachers and other public servants have defined-benefit plans (pensions), but that private-sector workers do not.

California gains when teachers have a secure retirement. Studies show that retiree spending from these benefits creates more than \$34.5 billion in total economic output for the state each year. Also, thousands of jobs have been created due to the economic activity of retirement benefit plans.

For more information: [calstrs.com](http://calstrs.com).

# Teacher Pensions: Healthy & On Track

By DINA MARTIN

**W**ith schools and colleges back in session, the last thing CTA members may want to think about is the rate of return and the overall health of their retirement benefits in the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS).

"That's why *we* are here," says Chris Ailman, CalSTRS chief investment officer.

Ailman affirms that CalSTRS, the world's largest educator-only pension fund, is indeed healthy despite worries over the worldwide volatility in the stock market (think terrorist attacks, Brexit, etc.). CalSTRS ended its 2015-16 fiscal year on June 30 with a 1.4 percent net return on investments.

While the net return is somewhat lower than previous years, those short-term peaks and valleys should be examined through the lens of long-term performance, says Ailman. "Looking at a one-year rate of return is like trying to measure one mile of an Olympic marathon. It is more important to look at long-term trends of five, 10 and 20 years."

CalSTRS' net returns reflect the following longer-term performance:

- 7.8 percent over three years.
- 7.7 percent over five years.
- 5.6 percent over 10 years.
- 7.1 percent over 20 years.

Ailman notes that the decade of the 2010s has been a "good performer, averaging 10.3 percent net."

What's more, the CalSTRS funding plan, which was put into place in June 2014 with the landmark pension legislation AB 1469, remains on track for full funding by 2046.

AB 1469 by Assembly Member Rob Bonta (D-Alameda) addressed the \$74 billion funding shortfall created by the Great Recession in 2008. Although CalSTRS has historically been a sound system, absent any changes in contribution rates, the program would have been depleted of its assets as early as 2046.

AB 1469 called for member contributions to increase from 8 to 10.25 percent between July 1, 2014, and July 1, 2016. The state's portion increased from 3.041 percent in 2014 to 6.3 percent on July 1. School and community college districts shoulder the greatest increase: Their contributions were 8.25 percent in 2014 and will continue to increase to 19.1 percent by 2021.

The impact of those contribution increases on current teachers is minimal compared to what they will see in their pension benefits upon retirement.

AB 1469 was negotiated with full collaboration and support by all stakeholder groups, representing employees, employers and the state. While some critics raised concerns that the larger contribution from school



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districts could result in cuts in salaries and educational programs, school employers point out they are already paying higher contribution rates for other nonclassified personnel and are able to handle the increase.

Despite ongoing attacks on public pension systems — largely by Wall Street interests that stand to invest that money while making profit off of the fees they can charge each individual — a study earlier this year by the UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education finds that the majority of teachers are better off with a CalSTRS defined-benefit pension than with a 401(k) plan alone. The reason, according to the study (“Are Teachers Better Off With a Pension or a 401(k)?”), is that retirement income with a 401(k) plan can fluctuate unpredictably with financial market conditions. For teachers who work at least five years, the CalSTRS defined-benefit pension provides a guaranteed retirement income.

Still, any retirement planner would be remiss if they didn't urge teachers to start a *voluntary* plan such as a 403(b), a retirement plan similar to a 401(k) only for certain tax-exempt and nonprofit organizations like schools and universities. More can be found about them at [ctainvest.org](http://ctainvest.org).

“Young teachers especially have to start contributing to a 403(b),” Ailman says. “Start a retirement account and let it grow for 30 to 40 years.” ■

## A New Way to Save

New for members is CTA's exclusively endorsed 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan, offering high-quality investment options with easy enrollment. Start saving now to ensure you are on track for retirement. Go to [CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp) or call 855-604-6222.

### The Savings Really Add Up!

Purchase	Frequency	Typical savings per purchase	Purchases per year	Yearly savings
<b>FOOD</b>				
Dining - Lunch	1 meal/wk	\$3.00	52	\$156.00
Dining - Dinner	2 meals/mo	\$5.50	24	\$132.00
Coffee & Donuts	1 items/wk	\$2.50	52	\$130.00
Pizza	2 purchases/mo	\$8.00	24	\$192.00
<b>EVERYDAY NEEDS &amp; SERVICES</b>				
Apparel	8 items per/yr	\$14.75	8	\$118.00
Home Improvement	2 purchases/yr	\$50.00	2	\$100.00
Carpet Cleaning	1 purchase/yr	\$20.00	1	\$20.00
Misc Shopping	8 purchases/yr	\$12.50	8	\$100.00
Flowers/Gifts	2 purchases/yr	\$6.50	2	\$13.00
Oil Changes	4 oil changes/yr	\$6.00	4	\$24.00
Cell Phone Service	12 payments/yr	\$8.25	12	\$99.00
Auto Parts	2 purchases/yr	\$15.00	2	\$30.00
<b>ENTERTAINMENT</b>				
Bowling/Laser Tag/Mini Golf	4 purchases/yr	\$6.25	4	\$25.00
Theme Park Visits	4 passes/yr	\$34.00	4	\$136.00
Concerts/Sports/Event Tickets	4 tickets/yr	\$27.00	4	\$108.00
Movies	6 tickets/yr	\$6.00	6	\$36.00
Golf	4 rounds/yr	\$18.00	4	\$72.00
<b>TRAVEL</b>				
Hotel Stays	7 nights/yr	\$13.00	7	\$91.00
Car Rental	5 days/yr	\$16.00	5	\$80.00
Cruise	1 cruise for two/yr	\$35.00	2	\$70.00
Ski Vacation	1 day pass/yr	\$15.00	1	\$15.00

**TOTAL SAVINGS \$1,747.00**

[www.CTAMemberBenefits.org](http://www.CTAMemberBenefits.org)





## Access to Savings

Newest addition to CTA Member Benefits offers popular discount program

**CTA MEMBER BENEFITS** provides valuable and exclusive benefits to you, your family and your career. The newest addition is the Access to Savings discount program, which has been enjoyed by some of our state affiliates. Now, as a member of CTA, you can also enjoy this program.

With more in-store merchant locations than any other **private discount program**, Access gives you unparalleled value at places you shop every day. These are **exclusive offers** delivering **deep discounts** of up to 50 percent off restaurants, retailers, hotels, theme parks, entertainment, home and garden, health and beauty, auto service, and many more.

The philosophy of the Access to Savings program is simple: The more you use it, the more you save. The Access savings network includes more than 350,000 merchants. Access believes that true value comes when you are able to save at places where you are already spending money.

As we do for all vendors being evaluated for endorsement, we did our homework. We were delighted to see many recommendations, such as the following:

*“I use my card daily on everything from meals to oil changes to vacation packages. There is nothing you can’t save on! I have literally saved almost three times my dues this year — talk about making my association work for me!”* —Jennifer Cameron, Georgia Association of Educators

*“This card saves, saves, and saves where you are or where you plan to go. Great to have.”* —Helen Harper Cooley, Alabama Education Association

We believe the addition of the Access to Savings discounts will be very valuable to our members, and we hope you agree.

To begin saving, go to [CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access). Once you have logged in, you can connect to the Access site and start enjoying your savings.

Also, you can get your deals on the go with your My Deals app by downloading it from the App Store or Google Play. There is no printing required — you simply show your discounts on your smartphone and save. Also, the My Deals app uses geolocation technology that pulls in deals based on your location. Whether you’re in San Jose, Los Angeles, Honolulu or New York, you’ll be given an automatic download of merchants near you.

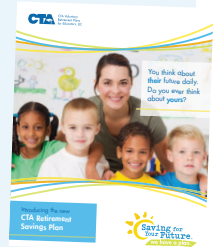
## What’s New in CTA Member Benefits?

We have exciting new developments in Member Benefits that can benefit you and your family.

### Prepare for Your Future

With a new, exclusively endorsed 403(b) plan — the **CTA Retirement Savings Plan** — which offers lower fees and has easy investment choices.

► [CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp)



### Save Money

Enjoy discounts with the **Access to Savings** program — see story at left and ad on page 51, and start saving today!

► [CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access)

### Reduce Your Debt

See our **Federal Student Loan Forgiveness Resources**, and also check out the new *Guide to Federal Student Loan Forgiveness Programs* and video. ► [CTAMemberBenefits.org/studentloan](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/studentloan)

### Save Time

Check out the new **CTA Member Benefits Video** — a six-minute overview of the CTA Member Benefits program.

► [CTAMemberBenefits.org/video](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org/video)

CTA Member Benefits, [member\\_benefits@cta.org](mailto:member_benefits@cta.org), 650-552-5200.

Join members saving hundreds or even thousands of dollars a year with CTA and NEA Member Benefits discounts and exclusive programs. Check out all the programs at [CTAMemberBenefits.org](http://CTAMemberBenefits.org) to make sure you are taking full advantage of the special programs available to you.



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