

california

educator

DECEMBER 2020 / JANUARY 2021 VOLUME 25 ISSUE 3

THE INNOVATION ISSUE

BEACONS OF HOPE

BEGINS ON PAGE 17

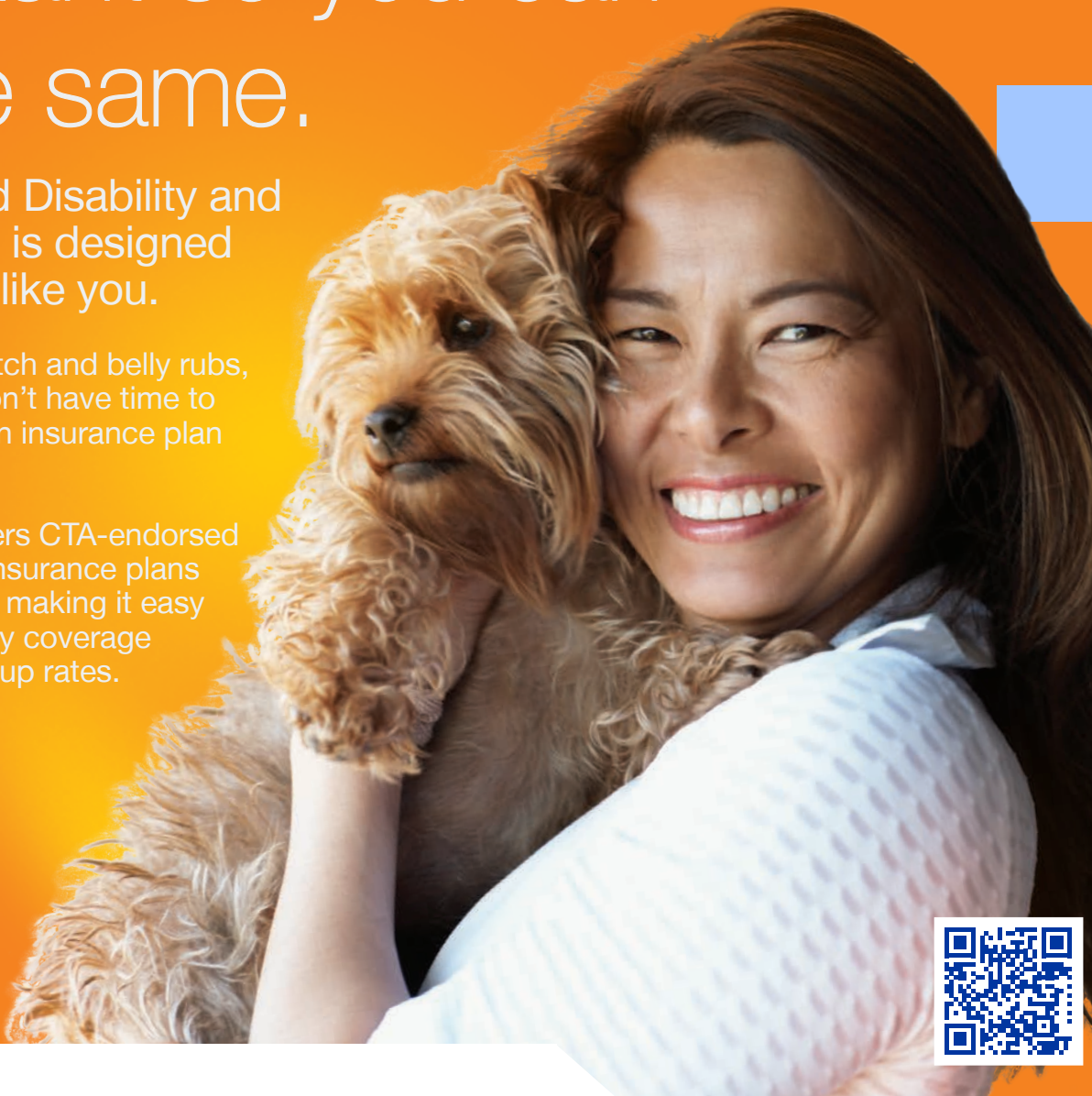


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VOLUME 25 ISSUE 3



THE 2020-21 INNOVATION ISSUE

Educators making a difference for their students during challenging times, page 17



#WeAreCTA

OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

MAGAZINE

TAKING CARE OF YOU

Give yourself some love so you can be in good shape for those around you. **PAGE 51**
cta.org/self-care

LIGHTS, CAMERA, MASKS!

Students' broadcast journalism work forges on during the pandemic. **PAGE 48**

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California's 2021 honorees are CTA members. **PAGE 55**
cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct

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tinyurl.com/CTA-Trauma

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cta.org/scholarships

THE GEAR YOU NEED

Level up your virtual classroom with this. **PAGE 47**

LIT FROM WITHIN

New(ish) works by members, now all together online too! **PAGE 64** cta.org/lit

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

CTA's Ethnic Minority Early Identification & Development program helps members of color step up to lead. **PAGE 11**
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GOT ISSUES? SO DO WE!

CTA's Issues Conference, Jan. 14-17, brings together local leaders and activists, virtually, on education and labor issues. **PAGE 9** cta.org

CCA WINTER CONFERENCE

Don't miss the Community College Association's Jan. 29-30 virtual gathering. **PAGE 9** cca4us.org

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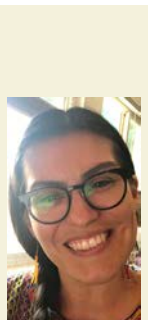


HOLIDAY GIFTS, DEALS

Save big with CTA Access to Savings on gifts, home & garden, health & beauty, auto services and more. CTAMemberBenefits.org/access

Inset photo: Ekaterina Shevchenko/Unsplash

THE INNOVATION ISSUE



BEACONS OF HOPE

As we navigate difficult times, these educators continue to nurture, inspire and teach their students PAGE 17



A Path to the Future

How educators can help students experiencing chronic trauma

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Educator in the White House

NEA member Jill Biden is ready to roll

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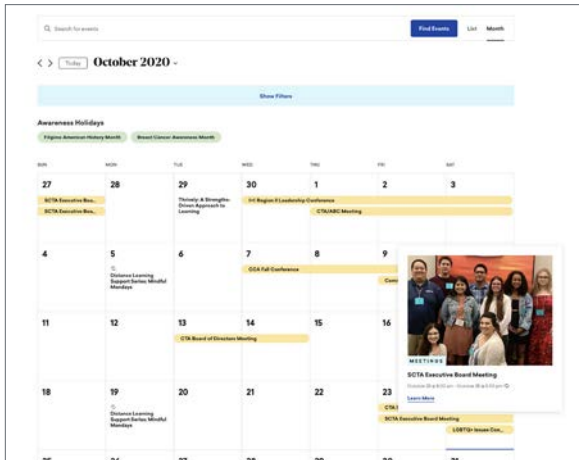
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Clockwise from top left: Robot car in Jose Gonzalez's classroom; cybersecurity maven Donna Woods (photo: synED); oral history project leader Jennifer Escobar; Wajeha Chaudhry reading. Above: Kelli Clayton and students let loose.



LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK. We accept signed email and letters; we excerpt user posts from CTA social media platforms and cta.org/educator. Content subject to editing for clarity and space. Photos must have permissions. Opinions expressed by writers are not necessarily those of CTA. Editor@cta.org; [#WeAreCTA](https://twitter.com/WeAreCTA)



Are You Aware?

Our August/September issue contained a foldout awareness calendar noting significant events and holidays throughout the year. A few of you sent in your thoughts, which we share below. We also want to let you know that CTA has a new, customizable online calendar (cta.org/events) with expanded content that includes awareness dates as well as CTA trainings, conferences, scholarship and grant application deadlines, and more. The CTA Calendar is searchable, and you can download and subscribe to selected events or the full calendar. Tell us what you think at editor@cta.org.

◀ Everything you want and need to know is in the CTA Calendar (cta.org/events). Our foldout awareness calendar, below.

Calls for more inclusion

The printed calendar fails to provide an awareness of things which all educators should be cognizant of. Some examples:

1) Years ago my school scheduled a Thanksgiving celebration, which included a full Thanksgiving meal, for the end of the week before. A Muslim student informed me that that day was the beginning of Ramadan, when members of her faith fast during daylight hours. The school agreed to celebrate a couple days earlier to accommodate these students.

2) The celebration of Hmong new year is when some students may miss school. I knew a school staff member who felt it was wrong for Hmong students to take off from school since they were now Americans. She clearly didn't understand the importance of cultural heritage.

I am asking that CTA be inclusive of more communities when it makes an awareness calendar. The fact that I stayed out of school for Jewish new year (Rosh Hashana) helped me understand the importance that Hmong students gave to the celebration of their new year.

I feel CTA has a very positive role to play and can always improve, which is what I am trying to do with this message.

NORMAN ZACK
CTA/NEA-Retired



I am disappointed that you missed National German American Day, Oct. 6.

LISA ALEXANDER
Sacramento City Teachers Association

My wife and I were both shocked to see that NOWHERE in the magazine or in your calendar of events is there a mention of remembering 9/11 — this is a big oversight. We should NEVER FORGET what happened on this date!

RICH AND LINDA ALSBURY
CTA/NEA-Retired

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youtube.com/californiateachers

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[WeAreCTA](https://pinterest.com/WeAreCTA)

For our full social media directory, see cta.org/social. [#OurVoiceOurUnion](https://twitter.com/OurVoiceOurUnion) [#WeAreCTA](https://twitter.com/WeAreCTA)

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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 for all students; 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.

EDITORIAL INFORMATION

California Educator is published for the information and edification of CTA members. The editorial philosophy is governed by the policies of CTA. Articles and advertising reflect that philosophy. Letters to the editor may be sent to editor@cta.org.

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2020, to Aug. 31, 2021) are \$937, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see cta.org/contribution for details). \$22.09 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives, and \$15.00 of CTA annual dues is designated for independent expenditures, totaling \$3709 not deductible for income tax purposes. Please consult your tax adviser.

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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Approved by





Starting 2021 With a Heart Full of Hope

I'VE NEVER BEEN happier to change the calendar in my life.

2020 was a trying year, especially for educators. Forced suddenly from our classrooms by an invisible enemy that threatened all our lives, we adjusted on the fly to a new learning environment (as educators and parents), organizing remotely to defend the health of our school communities and fighting to ensure classrooms physically reopen **#OnlyWhenItsSafe**.

We grieved together for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and countless other victims of police violence and systemic racism, taking to the streets en masse to demand justice and proclaim that Black Lives Matter. We led the fight for equity in our schools, as the raging pandemic exacerbated disparities in our communities, exposing that life during COVID-19 is a vastly and glaringly different experience depending on where one lives. We endured horrific wildfires that polluted our skies for days and destroyed many of our homes.

We won a historic election, and we lost one, too. The election of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as president and vice president of the United States ushers in a return to believing in what we can accomplish together as Americans, and a renewed commitment to education by the White House. But our joy and excitement are tempered by the narrow defeat of Proposition 15 here at home, which stings a little more because of how close we came to winning for our schools and communities.

We went toe-to-toe with the wealthiest corporations in the world, matching their hills of cash and mountains of misinformation with the power of our solidarity,



commitment to all students, and belief in the promise of public education. While it's obviously heartbreaking to come up short, I'm so proud of our combined efforts to make real change for our schools and communities. We will never stop fighting for our students and the resources they deserve!

Though 2020 is finally over, the many challenges we face are still just as real, dangerous and daunting in 2021 — the uncontrolled spread of COVID, systemic inequity and racism, economic uncertainty, the climate crisis, and bitter political polarization. It's going to take a lot of effort to overcome these crises and more when we're already so tired, but we know that many hands make light work, and there are 310,000 of us who believe in better.

I urge you to make some time for your own renewal, and to replenish yourself spiritually, physically, emotionally. Self-care is imperative for us to move forward and thrive, and to continue to care for others. See our story on page 51 for ways to take care of you.

As the great Victor Hugo said, "Even the darkest night will end and the sun will rise." From the bottom of my heart, thank you for fighting with all your might through the darkness and uncertainty. Let's rise together for a new dawn of building back better.

Our students, communities and our very nation are depending on us.

E. Toby Boyd

CTA PRESIDENT

@etobyboyd

**"We will never
stop fighting for
our students and
the resources they
deserve!"**

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Tucker Ring, M.A.Ed. '18, Special Education Teacher, Ramona Middle School

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BY NOVEMBER 30 TO START THIS SPRING!**



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apu.edu/education



Pre-pandemic, Alli McCart greets one of her students, many of whom suffer from chronic trauma. Story on page 30.

A Wealth of Talent & Heart



YOU'LL NOTICE in “A Path to the Future” (page 30) that the photos show educators in class with students. Kids of all ages are laughing and smiling, their teachers right next to them.

Of course, this was pre-COVID. The story, on helping students with chronic trauma, was reported and photographed before schools shut down in the spring. We held it so we could address the pandemic and its impact. But when a **UCLA report on student homelessness** came out this fall (page 35), we decided to pair the two, as homelessness is one of the “experiences” that make for chronic trauma (defined as trauma that is repetitive over time and includes neglect, abandonment, violence, abuse and bullying).

Back to the photos: It's simply wonderful to see happy and engaged students, and the love and care given to them by their teachers. I can only imagine how you must miss this, even in current in-person, socially distanced classrooms. I know students — and we parents — miss this terribly as well.

A better 2021 is on the horizon, and in that spirit we bring you our annual **Innovation Issue: Beacons of Hope** (page 17). We showcase eight educators who not only are excellent teachers but connect beautifully with students during this pandemic with innovative instruction and resources at hand.

Jennifer Hines makes video lessons for her Deaf and hard of hearing students — as well as their parents, so

parents can better communicate with their children. Davida Scott created a successful leadership program for her adult school students, many of whom cope with difficult circumstances.

Keara Williams attributes her success in tracking down unresponsive students following school closures to the relationships she built with them — “They know I'm coming from a place of love.” Jose Gonzalez's middle schoolers assist their communities by building pandemic-related apps that advise, for example, how to stay healthy and where to find staples in short supply.

Donna Woods' work teaching cybersecurity guides the next generation in protecting our networks and data. Wajeha Chaudhry reaches young minds and promotes literacy by reading bedtime stories on her popular YouTube channel. Jennifer Escobar preserves knowledge and heritage by recording oral histories. Don Dumas goes beyond textbooks to teach the truth about America's past.

We know our 2020-21 innovators are but a few of the thousands of you in California making an enormous difference in students' lives. Flipping through this issue alone demonstrates our trove of teacher treasures, from the heroes in “A Path to the Future” to this year's **California Teachers of the Year** (page 55) to “A Backstage Pass to Life” (page 48), where Doug Green's journalism students

learn real-world lessons. We are so grateful for the wealth of talent and heart you give to our children and youth.

May the new year bring the health and healing we all need and deserve. Thank you, educators.

Katharine Fong

EDITOR IN CHIEF

editor@cta.org

What About You?

You spend your career helping students plan for their future. CTA wants to help you plan for yours — and nurture yourself right now. Read our story on taking care of you on page 51, and how to build a secure financial future on page 56.



December 2020 / January 2021

CALENDAR



Happy 2021!

2020 IS A YEAR that has tested us in multiple ways. Big challenges remain for educators — to reopen schools safely, adjust to new ways of teaching and learning, and adapt to a new normal, whatever that may be. But we've got this! Let's celebrate our can-do spirit, infectious optimism, and inspiring dedication to our students. Here's to a bright and healthy 2021!

Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution. Jan. 30 celebrates Korematsu, who was jailed as a young man for defying the WWII internment of Japanese Americans, which he contested as unconstitutional. He was finally vindicated in 1983. Teach students about him and why speaking out against injustice is so important. Find curriculum at korematsuinstitute.org.

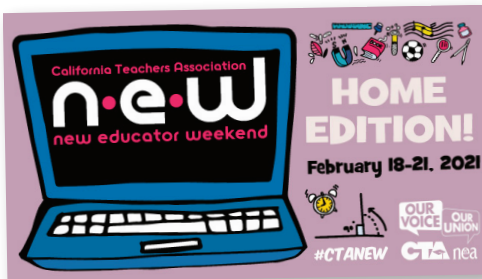
The Great Kindness Challenge

JAN. 25–29, 2021, is The Great Kindness Challenge Week. Educators can distribute checklists to students in grades pre-K–12 with challenges to complete 50 acts of kindness, such as learning to say hello in a new language, sitting with a new group of kids at lunch, helping a younger student, and picking up trash on campus. It's free and easy, helps prevent bullying, and creates a culture of kindness. Sign up at thegreatkindnesschallenge.com/schooledition.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY OF SERVICE

IN 1994, Congress designated the MLK holiday, first observed in 1986, as a national day of service. Make Jan. 18, 2021, a "day on, not a day off" for your students. Encourage them to serve their community by, for example, helping clean and beautify parks and neighborhoods, or volunteering at food banks. Find ideas and opportunities at pointsoflight.org/mlk-jr-day-of-service and oaklandca.gov/topics/mlk-day-of-service.





Virtually Free ▶ CTA's highly regarded member conferences this winter and spring will be virtual — and free. They're great opportunities to improve your skills, hear from top educational leaders, learn from experts and peers, and network with fellow educators from across the state. Sign up now for one (or all!) of the conferences below. You won't regret it!

CTA State Gold Awards

JAN. 8 NOMINATION DEADLINE

Given to individuals or organizations whose leadership, acts and support have shown they are true friends of public education. Any CTA member may nominate. ▶ cta.org/awards

CTA Human Rights Awards

JAN. 11 NOMINATION DEADLINE

Given to CTA members, chapters and Service Center Councils to promote programs for the advancement of human and civil rights. Any active CTA member, chapter, caucus or Service Center Council may nominate. ▶ cta.org/humanrightswards

Issues Conference

JAN. 14-17 CONFERENCE

Virtual. "Facing Extraordinary Times Together." Brings together local leaders and activists to discuss, strategize and organize on issues that matter. ▶ cta.org

CTA Scholarships

JAN. 29 APPLICATION DEADLINE

Scholarships up to \$5,000 are available to CTA members, their dependents and Student CTA members. ▶ cta.org/scholarships

NEA RA State Delegate Candidacy

JAN. 29 FILING DEADLINE

Candidates for NEA RA state delegate must submit a declaration of candidacy. See page 61. ▶ cta.org/racandidacy

CCA Winter Conference

JAN. 29-30 CONFERENCE

Virtual. Community College Association's winter conference focuses on advocacy. ▶ cca4us.org/conferences

National School Counseling Week

FEB. 1-5 EVENT

"School Counselors: All In for All Students." Counselors make unique contributions to education and can have tremendous impact on students' academic success and career plans. ▶ schoolcounselor.org/nscw

Good Teaching Conference North

FEB. 4-7 CONFERENCE

Virtual. "Elementary Home Edition!" Supports excellent teaching practices with a special focus on grades TK-5; offers a variety of diverse workshops on relevant curriculum content areas. ▶ cta.org

NEA Foundation Awards

FEB. 8 NOMINATION DEADLINE

Given for excellence in teaching and advocacy for the profession. Five finalists receive \$10,000; the winner receives \$25,000. ▶ cta.org/scholarships

MLK Scholarships

FEB. 12 APPLICATION DEADLINE

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarships up to \$6,000 are available to CTA members, their dependents and Student CTA members who are persons of color. ▶ cta.org/mlk-scholarship

New Educator Weekend North

FEB. 18-21 CONFERENCE

Virtual. "2021 Home Edition!" For educators in their first three years, NEW has everything you need to be successful, including sessions on classroom management, special education, state standards, assessments, and more. ▶ ctago.org

Equity and Human Rights Conference

FEB. 24-27 CONFERENCE

Virtual. "2021 Home Edition!" Affirms CTA's mission to protect the civil rights of children and secure a more equitable, democratic society. Speakers and workshops give members a greater understanding of diversity, equity and social justice. ▶ ctago.org

NEA Foundation Grants

FEB. 28 APPLICATION DEADLINE

NEA Foundation offers Student Achievement Grants and Learning & Leadership Grants in amounts of \$2,000 and \$5,000. ▶ neafoundation.org

CTA/NEA-Retired Issues Conference

MARCH 2-5 CONFERENCE

Virtual. Learn how CTA/NEA-Retired is protecting your future and keeping watch on federal legislation that affects your benefits. ▶ cta.org

Chavez/Huerta Awards

MARCH 5 ENTRY DEADLINE

Cesar E. Chavez and Dolores Huerta Education Awards recognize students who demonstrate understanding of Chavez's guiding principles. Awards up to \$550 go to both the sponsoring CTA member and the student. ▶ cta.org/scholarships

Good Teaching Conference South

MARCH 11-14 CONFERENCE

Virtual. "Middle and Secondary Home Edition!" Supports excellent teaching practices with a special focus on grades 6-12; offers diverse workshops on relevant curriculum content areas. ▶ ctago.org

California Reads 2020-21

EACH YEAR, CTA educators review and vet books to read and discuss with students, at all grade levels. The goal of **#CaliforniaReads** is to promote literacy and a lifelong love of reading, and help us better understand and accept ourselves, each other, and the world around us. This year's recommendations:



PRE-K, KINDERGARTEN	GRADES 1-2	GRADES 3-5	GRADES 6-8	GRADES 9-12
<p><i>In My Heart: A Book of Feelings</i> By Jo Witek and Christine Roussey</p> <p><i>Be Who You Are</i> By Todd Parr</p> <p><i>All Are Welcome</i> By Alexandra Penfold and Suzanne Kaufman</p> <p><i>Federico and All His Families</i> By Mili Hernández and Gómez</p>	<p><i>The Proudest Blue</i> By Ibtihaj Muhammad, S.K. Ali and Hatem Aly</p> <p><i>Hair Love</i> By Matthew A. Cherry and Vashti Harrison</p> <p><i>We Are Water Protectors</i> By Carole Lindstrom and Michaela Goade</p> <p><i>Mario and the Hole in the Sky: How a Chemist Saved Our Planet</i> By Elizabeth Rusch and Teresa Martinez</p>	<p><i>The Teachers March! How Selma's Teachers Changed History</i> By Sandra Neil Wallace, Rich Wallace and Charly Palmer</p> <p><i>Shaking Things Up: 14 Young Women Who Changed the World</i> By Susan Hood</p> <p><i>Indian No More</i> By Charlene Willing McManis and Traci Sorell</p> <p><i>Efrén Divided</i> By Ernesto Cisneros</p>	<p><i>Béisbol en Abril y Otros Cuentos</i> By Gary Soto</p> <p><i>Seedfolks</i> By Paul Fleischman and Judy Pedersen</p> <p><i>Black Brother, Black Brother</i> By Jewell Parker Rhodes</p> <p><i>Astronauts: Women on the Final Frontier</i> By Jim Ottaviani and Maris Wicks</p>	<p><i>Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You</i> By Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi</p> <p><i>The Beast Player</i> By Nahoko Uehashi and Cathy Hirano</p> <p><i>We Are Not From Here</i> By Jenny Torres Sanchez</p> <p><i>Watch Us Rise</i> By Renee Watson and Ellen Hagan</p>

Go to cta.org/californiareads for book synopses, past years' recommendations and more information.



CTA's EMEID Leadership Program

ARE YOU A CTA member of color? Interested in broadening your knowledge of CTA and exploring a possible role in leadership? The Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development Program (EMEID) can help.

EMEID promotes and develops ethnic minority leadership within CTA, locally and statewide. It builds on existing CTA/NEA programs, trainings, conferences and events, and incorporates coaching and interaction with leadership from local chapters, CTA/NEA, as well as CTA Board members and staff.

Members selected to participate in EMEID 2021-22 begin the program in June and finish 12 months later. They must commit to attending the Emerging Leaders strand at CTA's Summer Institute at UCLA, July 25-29, 2021.

Key dates in 2021: Apply online starting Feb. 16; application deadline is April 9. Applicants will be notified by May 14. Find more information at cta.org/EMEID.



The EMEID cohort of 2020-21. →

SCHOLARSHIP SEASON!

THE CTA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM offers educational scholarships for:

- Members (a maximum of five scholarships up to \$3,000)
- Dependent children of members (a maximum of 34 scholarships up to \$5,000)
- A dependent child attending a continuation high school or alternative education program (one scholarship up to \$5,000 in honor of Del A. Weber)
- Student CTA members (a maximum of three scholarships up to \$5,000 in honor of L. Gordon Bittle)

Application deadline is Jan. 29, 2021. Go to cta.org/scholarships for details.

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarship Program offers educational scholarships to CTA and CTA/NEA-Retired members, their dependents, and Student CTA members who are persons of color. Applicants must also be pursuing a degree, credential or certification for a teaching-related career in public education, and enrolled for summer or fall 2021. Application deadline is Feb. 12, 2021. Go to cta.org/mlk-scholarship for details.



CTA Awards: Nominations Are Open!

MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES abound to recognize your colleagues for their great work in an extraordinary year.

2021 PAULA J. MONROE CTA ESP OF THE YEAR

FOR AN education support professional whose work reflects the contributions of ESPs to public education. Any CTA member may nominate a CTA ESP member; go to cta.org/esp for details. Nominations due Jan. 8, 2021.

2021 CTA HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDS

AWARDED ANNUALLY to CTA chapters, Service Center Councils, and members in the following categories:

- American Indian/Alaska Native Human Rights Award in Honor of Jim Clark
- César Chávez "Sí Se Puede" Human Rights Award
- CTA Member Human Rights Award
- CTA Peace and Justice Human Rights Award
- African American Human Rights Award in Honor of Lois Tinson
- Human Rights Award for LGBTQ+ Advocacy in Honor of Nancy Bailey
- Pacific Asian American Human Rights Award
- Students with Exceptional Needs Human Rights Award
- Human Rights Award for Women's Advocacy

Go to cta.org/humanrightsawards for more information and for the nomination form. Nominations due on or before Jan. 11, 2021.

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Kids Zoom the Darndest Things

Distance learning bloopers, laughs and joy

By @samdemuro

DESPITE THE CHALLENGES and stress, distance learning has brought us quite a few laughs! We asked educators to share their funniest, most heartwarming, and strangest moments of remote instruction on our Facebook page. A few choice answers:

KAYLIE PETERS

Three days in a row a student put her Chromebook in a little red wagon and took it/me on a tour of her whole house, with the microphone ON, so you would hear the rumbling of the wagon as it was dragged across the house.

EMILY SMITH LINTS

I had a student write nonsense in the chat. When I asked if everything was OK, he told me his cat walked across his keyboard. 🤔🤔

BETHANY NICKLESS MEYER

A little girl picks up a whole liter of Coke and starts drinking it. "Are you going to drink all of that?" "glug glug glug glug glug" *entire first grade class stares in shock*

JEN GRIFFIN WILSON

I can't even count the times I ask students to not lick the camera!

MARJI PETERSON AVESON

One of my students wrote "BRB I have to get my waffles" in the chat and then was mad I started the quiz without him.

MARISA PIERUCCI

My student asked her Alexa how to spell "because" and my Alexa answered her! 🤖

JEANNINE MACLEOD

Word got out that it was my birthday. My students changed their Zoom screens to pictures of cakes, balloons, and candles. All had birthday messages for me. I was quite touched.

HEATHER SWITHENBANK MUIR

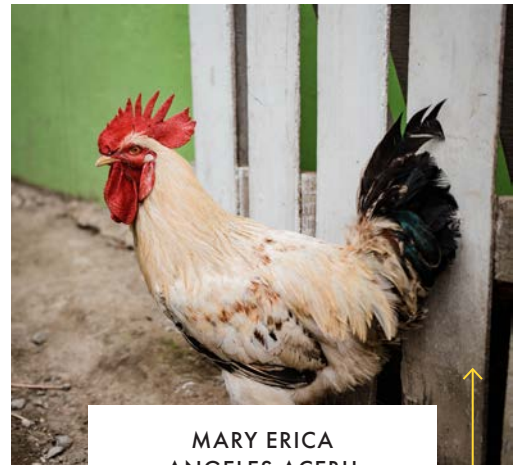
One of my 2nd graders decided to join us in Zoom while strolling through Costco.

MARIA SOLIS

While [I was] talking to a student via Zoom, his little brother puts his nostrils right up to the camera trying to see what [was] on the screen. It took me a second to figure out what was going on because it was dark and scary-looking in there! 🤖

ELISA FRIAS

On the first day of 9th grade English, one of my students asked a girl out in the class's Zoom chat box... while I was teaching. Bold move, young man, bold move.



MARY ERICA ANGELES ACEBU

Student (family owns a farm) brought his rooster to Zoom class! I told him it's our new class pet! 😊

JULIE STEPHENS

One of my 9th graders has designated himself as the "emoji guy," and narrates our class with emojis in the chat. It's pretty awesome!

JENNY BIGLOW

Weird: I still pop a Tic Tac after lunch. Because teaching from an empty room means having fresh breath!

VANESSA OLSON MEDIANO

A 7th grader who is usually camera on and actively participates was camera off. I called on him... nothing... called on him again (with worry in my voice)... [then] his video is on and his 6-year-old brother is visible. He says, "My brother went with grandpa to pick up pizza for lunch. I'm writing stuff for him while he's gone."

KAREN YUNGMAN

I teach elementary. It was crazy hat day. A few of my kids said they didn't have anything, so I said, be creative and have fun! One of my students wore his mother's bra!

Have a funny story to share about your distance learning experience? Email social@cta.org or tweet us @WeAreCTA.

Compiled by Julian Peeples

Quotes & Numbers



6 MILLION

Students attending the 957 school districts in counties in the purple tier for COVID-19 risk as of Nov. 28, 2020, meaning that distance learning is required for 99.24 percent of California public school students.

88%

Percentage of voters in a statewide Hart Research Associates poll who approve of CTA's demand for universal COVID testing and contact tracing in schools.

69%

Percentage of public school parents in the same poll who say they worry more about children being infected with coronavirus than about them falling behind academically without in-person instruction.

1,225,189

Cases of COVID-19 in California — 3 percent of the state population — as of Dec. 1, according to California Department of Public Health.

222,000

California students in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, more than a quarter of the 800,000 nationwide.

269,000

Number of California K-12 students who are homeless, according to a new UCLA report (see page 35).



“IT’S EXCITING TO SEE SO MANY NEW UNIONS ON [COMMUNITY COLLEGE] CAMPUSES. IT SHOWS HOW FACULTY AND STAFF WANT A VOICE. WE WANT TO BE ABLE TO SIT DOWN AT THE BARGAINING TABLE AND SPEAK UP FOR OURSELVES AND OUR STUDENTS.”

—DEWAYNE SHEAFFER, CTA District Q director and president of NEA’s National Council for Higher Education, on increased union activism on college campuses nationwide.

“IT IS EVEN MORE CRITICAL NOW FOR EDUCATORS TO STEP INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA, ESPECIALLY RUNNING FOR OFFICE, BECAUSE MANY TIMES DECISIONS ARE BEING MADE FOR US OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM.”

—KEN TANG, NEA Board of Directors and Garvey Education Association member, on why he ran for a seat on Alhambra Unified School District Board of Education — and won.

“Standing in solidarity with each other is where our collective strength lies. All educators and all students across the state should be safe when returning to our classrooms. If all of us are not safe, none of us are safe.”

—ERICKA CASTILLO, Emery Teachers Association president, on the October unified call by Alameda County local educators associations for uniform COVID-19 testing and tracing before schools can physically reopen.

“An injury to one of our students is an injury to all of us! We must show our Black, Indigenous and other students of color that we see the systemic roadblocks in their path, and we will help them build a new one paved with opportunity for all!”

—E. TOBY BOYD, CTA president, on the continuing fight for equity, equality and justice for all students during his October speech to CTA State Council of Education.

Listen With a Warm Heart

By **Richard Cohen**

"It is only with the heart that one can see rightly."
—Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*

NO MATTER HOW conflicted we may feel about this historical moment, the surest path to calmness and healing is to develop an active warm heart. These are trying and conflicting times. *It is not me, but us* who can bring calm to the moment. We, the educators, must lead our students and fellow educators by becoming our best selves. Trying times create opportunities to see more clearly.

After three days working with a very conflicted fifth and sixth grade class, as I was leaving, a girl handed me a note that said apologetically, "The people who don't care truly do care." If we listen with a warm heart, the one who makes you angry does care; we just don't understand her or his struggle. This presents us with the opportunity "to make minds together," as author Dan Siegel tells us in *Mind: A Journey to the Heart of Being Human*.

Unfortunately, our reactivity that comes either from our taking everything personally or from our ego that prevents us from truly understanding each other, gets in the way. This is why we must become our best selves if we are to educate, to lead forward. This requires both an internal and external *paradigm shift* — from the judgmental to the compassionate, from punishing to healing. Can we replace punishment and exclusion with kindness?

What I just said about a paradigm shift in education applies equally to all our other self-perpetuating systems: systemic racism, criminal injustice, environmental mismanagement, economic injustice, gender inequality, religious intolerance, and on and on.

Now we need kindness. As Shakespeare wrote in *The Merchant of Venice*, "The quality of mercy is not

strained. It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven upon the place beneath. It is twice blest: It blesseth him that gives and him that takes."

The questions remain: What is this internal work that we must do? How do we learn to be a more empathic, centered, calm and compassionate person?

If we acquire a beginner's mind, we can stop making assumptions about what is going on. Every situation presents us with a unique opportunity, an opportunity to grow and expand our understandings. We don't know until we look carefully at what is happening — who am I, and who is the person with whom I am trying to connect?

Can we learn to respond and not react? Can we stop taking criticism as a personal attack? Can we bring peace to the moment of disruptive acting out? To do this requires determination and patience. Old patterns of anger and insecurity run deep. From my perspective (and everyone must find their own way), if I can separate the problem from the person, it is much easier to accept those feelings as being "out there," not a symptom of some personal moral deficiency.

Anger is the problem; you are not the problem. Treat anger, like any other negative emotion, as a third person. *Anger got to me, not I am an angry person*. This makes it easier to take responsibility for harsh and hurtful feelings, thoughts and words. This requires a mindful awareness of how you are feeling at the moment and what steps you can take to let it go.

Another related tool that I find helpful is to pause and ask myself, "What's going on here?" This deconstructive inquiry allows me to step back and reflect inwardly upon the relationship between myself and the person with whom I am relating. Am I aware of the complete person and

the cultural environment from which they came? This deeper inquiry brings greater understandings that help us *respond* to what is truly happening, rather than *react* to it. What is real is not always true. ■



Richard Cohen

"We must become our best selves if we are to educate, to lead forward. This requires both an internal and external paradigm shift — from the judgmental to the compassionate, from punishing to healing."

Richard Cohen is a lawyer, academic, mediator and restorative justice practitioner. He has been a substitute teacher at Sacramento City Unified School District the past four years, and a member of Sacramento City Teachers Association until schools closed in spring.

Our members have heart

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BEACONS OF HOPE

As we navigate uncertain times, these educators continue to nurture, inspire and teach their students

By **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**

Illustrations by Kelly Malka

Don Dumas
teaches high schoolers
the truth **PAGE 18**

Jennifer Hines
connects with Deaf students
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Jose Gonzalez
keeps kids thriving
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helps youth rise **PAGE 22**

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records history **PAGE 25**

Wajeha Chaudhry
reaches children through reading
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focuses students on
the future **PAGE 28**



BEACONS OF HOPE



"We are always telling our students to do what's right and be truthful," Don Dumas says. "We must do the same when teaching about America's past, so students can better understand the present."

Howard Dumas

Putting History Into Context

Don Dumas goes beyond textbooks to teach the truth about America's past

DON DUMAS WAS teaching students about racism long before there was a Black Lives Matter movement and unprecedented nationwide protests demanding social justice. For the past decade, he has helped students explore how racism is woven throughout America's entire history — and how painful events of the past continue to shape our world.

Teaching through a social justice lens made Dumas one of five 2019-20 San Diego County Teachers of the Year. Sweetwater Education Association President Julie Walker describes the SEA member as a "teacher leader" who encourages colleagues to go beyond the textbook.

"Textbooks are not designed to tell us the truth about what happened in the past," says Dumas, a teacher at Bonita Vista High School in Chula Vista. "Textbooks are designed to make us feel nostalgia for an American past that hasn't existed for everyone, although it may have existed for some."

Books such as *The Half Has Never*

Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism by Edward E. Baptist and *Race and Manifest Destiny* by Reginald Horsman are used in his classes to "fill in the gaps" in state-adopted textbooks. Students learn, for example, that the main reason for the Mexican-American War was not a border dispute or to avenge the killing of 16 American soldiers, as students have been traditionally taught. Instead, the U.S. wanted to expand its cotton empire and slave power, says Dumas. As for the Civil War, students learn that Abraham Lincoln espoused white supremacist views as a congressman running for Senate, and that slaves played an enormous role in freeing themselves.

"I want students to understand that slaves played the biggest roles in grabbing their freedom, and that my students, too, have the power to shape their environment. I want them to know they can make things happen, like other people have done throughout history. That's why I teach the way I do."

"He changed my view on almost everything I knew about historical

Don Dumas

CHAPTER
Sweetwater Education Association

POSITION
AP History teacher



events,” says Helaina Saka, a senior. “He connected the dots about what really happened. It was my favorite class last year.”

“Mr. Dumas is a great teacher,” says Tabari Taper Rodriguez, currently in Dumas’ AP history class. “He likes students to share their ideas and debate, because it shows we are actually learning. Nobody is disrespected, and everybody is heard in his classroom.”

While growing up in nearby Imperial Beach, Dumas seldom felt heard in school. As a biracial child of a Black father and

white mother, he felt like an outsider. He could not relate to the curriculum. He became rebellious.

“I made mistakes, went to juvenile hall, and was not on the college track. A lot of it had to do with the fact that I felt invisible.”

After high school, he worked as a mailroom clerk. A co-worker let him

borrow *A People’s History of the United States* by Howard Zinn, which presents alternative views of historical events. And the rest, as they say, is history. He enrolled in community college, transferred to San Diego State and became a history teacher.

“That book told the history of marginalized groups,” says Dumas, a child of two dropouts who was raised in poverty. “It validated what I had been unable to verbalize: The political and economic systems that operate in this country are exploitive. I was completely enthralled. My friend never got his book back.”

Dumas’ animated in-person teaching style may be a little different on Zoom, but classroom debates are still happening. Students have compared recent protests to the Boston Tea Party, whose participants took to the streets and destroyed property. On Sept. 23, the day that police officers were charged with “wanton endangerment” for the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor, students learned about what occurred on Sept. 23 over six decades ago: Two white men were acquitted in a Mississippi courtroom for the murder of Emmett Till, a 14-year-old Black child who was accused of flirting with a white woman.

Students are learning history, but also *experiencing* history — and should be excited about that, says Dumas. He tells them that hundreds of years from now, people may read their social media posts to better understand about living in a pandemic accompanied by racial unrest.

Parents occasionally complain that showcasing the dirty truths of American history is unpatriotic. Dumas takes that in stride and is supported by his district.

“I am challenging the dominant historical narrative. Many of my colleagues would also like to also do that, but they are afraid of getting complaints. I encourage history teachers to be courageous. We are always telling our students to do what’s right and be truthful. We must do the same when teaching about America’s past, so students can better understand the present.”

Bridging the Gap


Jennifer Hines’ videos teach her Deaf and hard of hearing students — and their parents

IT WAS CHALLENGING for students and their parents to transition to online learning when schools shut down in March. For Deaf and hard of hearing students — and their families — it was even more challenging. That’s because parents are usually not as fluent in American Sign Language (ASL) as their children, which presents difficulties when they’re trying to help with schoolwork.

Jennifer Hines, a sixth grade Deaf/hard of hearing teacher at Henry Eissler Elementary School in Bakersfield, is helping bridge the communication gap. She creates ASL videos for her students, which she also interprets for their parents so they can improve their ASL.



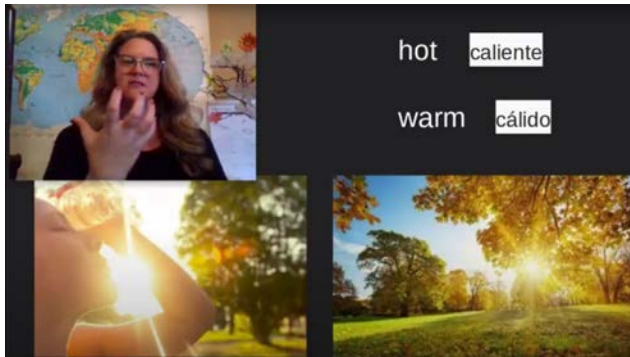
Jennifer Hines



Jennifer Hines

CHAPTER
Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association

POSITION
Sixth grade Deaf/hard of hearing teacher



“I treat all my children like they are my own children. Our children are precious, and that’s how I want teachers to treat my kids.”

“A lot of people think that deafness is hereditary, but more than 90 percent of Deaf children have hearing parents,” says Hines, a member of the Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association.

“When their children are little, parents can keep up with basic phrases. But when the kids get older, the vocabulary gets complicated. Many parents say they have gotten stuck in the basics and are struggling to keep up with their children, who are acquiring sign language at a faster rate than parents can keep up with. This has become even more problematic in the pandemic.”

Aubrey Harris, whose son Landon was in Hines’ class last year, appreciates the effort.

“After the schools shut down, these videos made it easy to help us continue our work at home in a way that was as normal and easy as possible,” says Harris. “It was 100 percent helpful with math lessons — especially word problems. Being able to watch Jennifer explain the lesson while teaching us more sign language was great. It was so nice to have a teacher helping parents be involved, instead of only working with our children at school.”

Hines also translates into Spanish so Spanish-speaking parents can understand ASL in her videos, which she creates in Screencastify. Everyone can watch the videos again and again.

“If the families don’t know English,

I’ll put the Spanish word underneath the English word. If they can go from Spanish to ASL, we can bypass English, which makes it easier than having to learn two languages at once.”

Damaris and Raul Zubia are the aunt and uncle of Maria, a student whose mother passed away before school started. As her new legal guardians, they have been struggling to communicate with Maria. The videos are helping.

“Mrs. Hines’ videos have helped us to communicate and to connect as a family,” wrote the Zubias in a text. “Our extended family and friends have been motivated to learn ASL. It helps that in some of the videos, she has the words in Spanish. We also appreciate that Mrs. Hines is truly invested in the well-being of Maria as a whole. She is sensitive to not only [her] educational needs but also her emotional needs.”

“I treat all my children like they are my own children,” says Hines. “Our children are precious, and that’s how I want teachers to treat my kids.”

This year, Hines is creating lots of how-to videos for students, because most videos explaining how to use Zoom or turn in assignments online are designed for hearing students. She also creates videos on demand: A parent whose child was being impolite asked her to make a video on the importance of manners, and she did.

Hines originally planned to teach



Jose Gonzalez

“I love that minority kids who are traditionally underrepresented in STEAM are so interested in using technology to help their communities.”

general education while attending the University of Oklahoma. But a friend begged her to visit a teaching program for Deaf/hard of hearing education at the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma.

“I was intrigued and ready for something different, so I transferred into that program as a junior and had two years to learn sign language. I immersed myself in ASL and spent all my time with the Deaf community.”

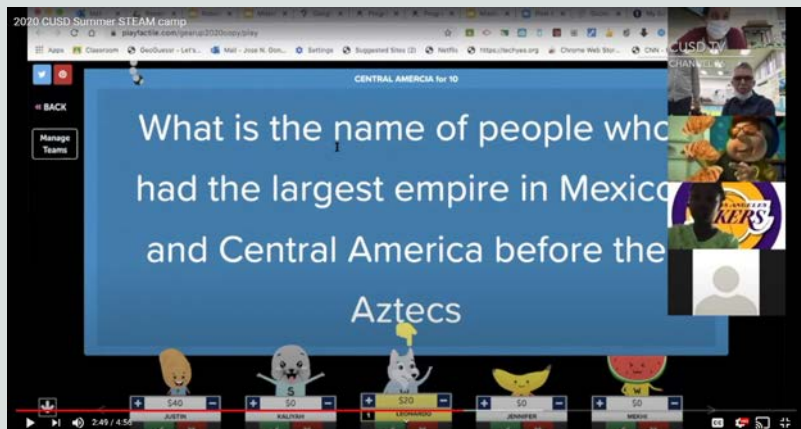
A recruiter from Bakersfield City School District came to the university and hired her on the spot.

Hines has received attention from local media for her willingness to go the extra mile to help her students and their families, but is modest about all the recognition.

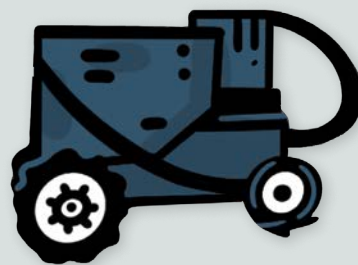
“I am just one of many educators in this world trying to find innovative ways to reach our kids and families,” she says.

Thriving With Tech

Compton teacher Jose Gonzalez guides students in STEAM



Gonzalez (upper right) had students learn geography, history and culture as they programmed and operated robot cars remotely.



ROBOTS TOOK a road trip throughout Latin America this summer, courtesy of a group of Compton students and their teacher, Jose Gonzales.

Well, technically, the robots explored various countries while rolling atop a large map on the floor of a classroom inside Bunche Middle School, controlled by students working remotely from home and connected on Zoom. Students had to research and answer questions about Latin American culture, geography and current events, and program their robots to journey forth based on the answers.

For example, students had to name a famous poet from Chile (Pablo Neruda), identify the longest mountain range in South America (the Andes), and visit countries for simulated COVID-related missions such as contact tracing in outbreak hotspots.

This is one example of how Gonzalez, a Compton Education Association member, is refusing to let the pandemic short-circuit projects students love. Since distance learning went into effect, he has worked from his empty classroom so students can remotely take advantage of the cool gadgetry there. In addition to Latin America, students have focused on COVID-related projects closer to home.

"We've received a lot of attention, including being featured on *Good Morning America*," says Gonzales, who teaches STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) at Davis Middle School in Compton, a community where many

students face challenges. "I love that minority kids who are traditionally underrepresented in STEAM are so interested in using technology to help their communities."

Five years ago, Gonzalez created a Tech Team at Bunche Middle School with a grant from GenYES — a nonprofit that empowers underserved students through technology. His team supported staff by taking apart PCs and building new ones, troubleshooting computer issues, connecting printers and LCD projectors, and creating workshops for students about cyberbullying.

Thanks to a grant from Verizon in 2017 that provided iPads for all students, staff and educational support, students transitioned to becoming innovators themselves. Projects included building a space plane that used a space simulator with real orbital dynamics; building a prototype rover to explore the surfaces of other worlds; building robots; creating virtual reality goggles that offer a tour of Mars; and using code to simulate space radar.

The Bunche "bunch" won local awards, placing third in the district's annual STEAM-Fest competition for their Mars Habitat Exhibit, which included a hydroponics system that utilized live fish waste to fertilize plants in a closed system for providing food to future astronauts. Team Captain Yerenia Barrajas was recognized nationally by GenYES for her leadership. Members visited UC Berkeley and a famous film studio nearby.

Then the pandemic hit, and the team that met daily and most Saturdays at school could no longer meet in person.

Jose Gonzalez

CHAPTER

Compton Education Association

POSITION

Middle school technology teacher



Students quickly pivoted to address COVID-related problems in their community. Mark Sandoval, now in eighth grade, made an app sharing information on how to survive and stay healthy during the pandemic. Uriah White, also in eighth grade, created an app based on her own online research, sharing store locations where items in short supply, like toilet paper, could be found.

Students made videos about what their lives were like in the pandemic, which Gonzalez edited into a presentation. They made videos of what their summer might look like without COVID and talked about what they missed the most. It made them feel better.

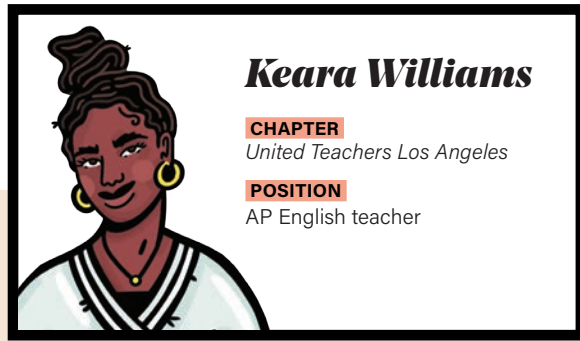
"I was in tears watching the videos," says Gonzalez. "They were so honest about their feelings. They worried about their grandparents. They missed their peers. They were confined to spaces with lots of siblings. It was very emotional."

Gonzalez, born in Cuba, is no stranger to hardships himself. He sought asylum in Canada as a child, joining his father, who had escaped on a boat years earlier. He grew up in tough neighborhoods and describes some of his teachers as "angels" who put him on the right path.

This year, he transferred to Davis Middle School to start a new Tech Team, which has 12 students and is growing. He is training teachers to use the new technology lab made possible by a 2020 Verizon grant. Four students transferred with him, including Sandoval and White. Distance learning continues, and so do exciting new projects.

Davis students are "building" 3D affordable housing in the CoSpaces Edu program and making videos addressing social issues including gun violence and gender stereotypes. Students taught parents how to use Zoom on their iPads, and Gonzalez filmed parents' cooking shows, viewable on YouTube, which were very popular and even made the local news.

"We don't get bored, because Mr. Gonzalez comes up with a lot of projects that keep us active," says Sandoval. "He's a very cool teacher."



Persistence Pays Off

Keara Williams' can-do spirit paves way for student success



SOME TEACHERS DON'T take no for an answer. Keara Williams is in that category.

When schools closed due to the coronavirus, she tracked down students who did not respond to the many messages she sent, and somehow managed to sign them up for distance learning.

When students thought they couldn't graduate, she met with them online to offer credit recovery so they could receive their diplomas.

And even though her students are mostly at home, Williams is making sure project-based learning doesn't fall by the wayside. Such projects have gone virtual, so students stay connected to their community.

Williams teaches in South Los Angeles at the Responsible Indigenous Social Entrepreneurship (RISE) School, located on the Hawkins High School campus. She is inspired by the rapper Nasir "Nas" Jones, and she begins each class with this quote from his song "I Can":

I know I can
Be what I wanna be
If I work hard at it
I'll be where I wanna be

Williams grew up in the neighborhood where she now teaches, and some of her former teachers are now colleagues. Her favorite pastime as a child was playing school with her younger sister and cousins, and she always insisted on being the teacher. She says she has never been afraid to advocate for herself and others when necessary.

The AP English teacher describes her teaching style as "extremely flexible" with a focus on connecting with students. So when schools closed last March and some of her students went missing, she went after them.



UTLA called Williams a “she-ro” for her fruitful connections with students.

“To make it as real as possible, my students are studying credit, small businesses, and the impact of the pandemic on those things.”

The *Los Angeles Times* called it “one teacher’s quest to track down her students” in an April story. Other local media said she was heroic for her ability to “overcome her students’ lack of participation” and reach out to them.

At first, many students did not respond to her messages. Some lacked Wi-Fi at home. Others were caring for young siblings.

Williams left message after message with parents. Her grandmother, a native of Belize, left messages in Spanish (RISE’s student population is almost three-quarters Hispanic and about one-quarter Black). Williams connected families to school resources to ensure students had internet access and devices. She helped them and their families overcome the challenges of distance learning, the digital divide and the language barrier.

Williams relied on her relationships with the students, as she told radio station KCRW. “It becomes easier over time, especially when students know where your heart is. So if I’m

telling the student ‘Hey, I didn’t get an assignment, what’s going on?’ they’re more likely to tell me or just submit it because they know that I’m coming from a place of love.”

Still, some of her students lacked enough credits to graduate. She met with them one-to-one on Zoom so they could catch up, get the credits they needed and graduate with their class.



Keara Williams

“I got many thank-you emails for this,” says Williams, a member of United Teachers Los Angeles. “Some students sent apologies for not trying beforehand, or for giving me a hard time. But they were very appreciative.”

This school year the challenges have continued. Project-based learning (PBL) has always been a priority at RISE, a school of business and entrepreneurship. To meet that challenge in a pandemic, PBL transitioned online.

“To make it as real as possible, my students are studying credit, small businesses, and the impact of the

pandemic on those things. Some are writing about what is going on in their community with small businesses. Some are creating brochures informing the community about Small Business Administration loans. Students are writing advertising for businesses, along with interviewing business owners and analyzing data. This is all done virtually.”

Williams graduated from UCLA’s teacher education program in 2017 and was part of its first ethnic studies cohort. She serves as adviser to the Black Student Union at her school, and her goal is making sure that Black students are as represented as possible in AP courses. She has just applied to enter UCLA’s Ph.D. program in education, with an emphasis on race.

Bridgette Moore, who graduated last June, calls Williams her role model.

“We students did not make it easy for her,” says Moore, who attends West Los Angeles Community College and plans on becoming a lawyer. “I had a lot of attitude and sometimes frustration with the work. But she was patient, supportive, and had a big heart. She prepared me for the real world. She helped me to become the best version of myself.”



◀ ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATIONS

KELLY MALKA is a Los Angeles-based illustrator whose work has appeared in, among others, the *LA Times*, Rock the Vote, The Pad Project, Nike and Zappos (which commissioned the art at left for [#WorldTeachersDay](#) 2020). kellymalka.com

The Cyberspace Warrior

Donna Woods leads student learning in protecting our networks, devices and data

FOREIGN COUNTRIES INFLUENCING our elections. Ransomware attacks on hospitals. School districts hacked and confidential records leaked. Identity theft ruining credit and reputations.

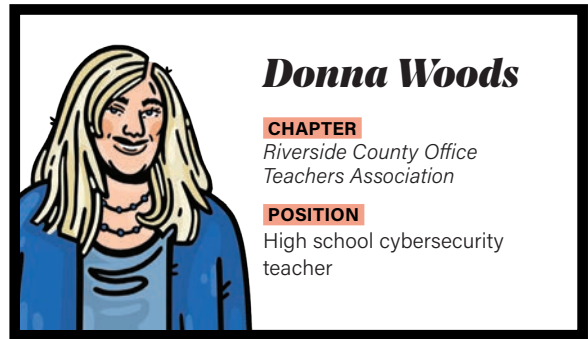
These are just some of the problems caused by increasingly sophisticated cyber criminals. Research shows that a cyberattack occurs every 39 seconds in the U.S.

To combat this trend, teacher Donna Woods co-authored a cybersecurity education pathway program in the Moreno Valley Unified School District six years ago. In May, she was honored with the Presidential Cybersecurity Education Award for her work in that program.

Woods works in the career technical education (CTE) department of her district and has been a teacher at Canyon Springs High School for 20 years. In addition to co-creating the Cyber Academic Pathway program, she authored “a-g” curriculum for the Cybersecurity Levels 1 and 2 courses she teaches. Together with a team of cybersecurity instructors and industry mentors, Woods also leads award-winning CyberPatriot teams, which compete nationally in challenges against other schools to secure virtual networks.

“Cybersecurity is my passion,” says Woods, a member of the Riverside County Office Teachers Association. “The field is so exciting. It impacts every aspect of technology, from our phones and smart technology home devices to our national grid. There is so much to learn.”

The Department of Homeland Security defines cybersecurity as “the art of protecting networks, devices, and data from unauthorized access or criminal use and the practice of ensuring confidentiality, integrity, and availability of information.”



Cybersecurity pays well and is one of the fastest-growing fields in the world, with more than 500,000 unfilled jobs in the U.S. Students are discovering it is a viable and fulfilling career path.

“I thought computers were mostly for playing games,” says Fabio Cornejo, a Canyon Springs graduate now at CSU San Bernardino. “But I joined the CyberPatriot Club in my sophomore year, and things changed. My plan is to be in charge of cybersecurity for a private company. I can’t picture myself doing anything else.”

Amiyah Breeding is a cadet at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. She credits Woods with helping her land there.

“The Air Force’s mission is to fly, fight and win in both airspace and cyberspace,” says Breeding. “So a basic knowledge of cybersecurity is very important to that mission.”

Over the past five years, the Cyber Academic Pathway has expanded from two high schools to five middle schools in the district, serving grades 6-12. The pathway is a recognized CompTIA Partnership Academy (tech association CompTIA offers certification programs, networking and skills development) and is aligned with framework standards of the National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education (NICE), a partnership of government, academia and the private sector. Palo Alto Networks, Cyber.org, synED, and ConvergeOne are strategic industry partners that develop and support the pre-apprenticeship and work-based learning programs.

Pathway courses are aligned with the Riverside Community College District via articulation and dual enrollment, so students can transfer into higher-level courses and get college credit for high school classes.

During the pandemic, pathway instructors, along with synED, hosted online cyber camps for 400 students from nine states and three countries, and provided summer workshops to 127 teachers. The program also hosted online Girl Scout Cyber Camps



Donna Woods

“Cybersecurity impacts every aspect of technology, from our phones and smart technology home devices to our national grid.”



Woods and students at a National Initiative for Cybersecurity Education K-12 conference. *Photo: SynED*

on weekends to encourage more females to enter STEAM and computer careers.

Woods became interested in computers in the 1980s, when few women were in the field, through her work in the aerospace industry. When she went to aerospace or computer science conferences, she was mistaken for a secretary.

"I thought about dyeing my blonde hair dark, because people didn't take me seriously and asked me to get them a cup of coffee," she laughs.

She began teaching computer skills at the Riverside County Adult Education Program and enjoyed it so much, she decided to earn a teaching credential in information and communications technologies and a master's degree in workforce education development. She taught computer certification courses at the high school level and then turned her focus to cybersecurity, in partnership with synED, a nonprofit that nominated her for the award (Woods is synED's academic relations manager).

Woods serves on the governor's Cybersecurity Task Force, the NICE Working Group and the NICE K-12 planning group.

The presidential award caught her by surprise. She almost didn't answer the call from a restricted number in Washington, D.C. But when she did, it was U.S. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos informing her of the award, established by executive order in conjunction with the National Security Council's homeland security adviser and the National Science Foundation.

"Forty-three states submitted nominations, and I had assumed the award was put on hold due to COVID," says Woods. "I was deeply honored that the collaborative work of our team of instructors and partners was being recognized. When it fully hit me, I began to cry happy tears, as our work has been a very fulfilling journey. We are changing the lives of our students."



Jennifer Escobar, right, with fellow oral history project teachers Karyn Thomas, Angelena Tavares and Kimberly Thomas.

The Power of Oral Histories

Jennifer Escobar helps teachers and students record the past

JENNIFER ESCOBAR was raised in a family with a rich tradition of storytelling that helped her understand her Chicana heritage. It was a way to pass on customs and knowledge from one generation to the next.

Her mother shared stories of growing up in Texas, where she was punished for speaking Spanish at school. Later, she went back to school and became a teacher. She told her daughter to be proud of who she was, fight against discrimination, and value education. Her stories reminded Escobar to be strong when she felt like an outsider attending UC Riverside in the 1990s, which had few students of color at the time and seldom assigned literature from Chicana authors and those from other historically marginalized backgrounds.

The community college educator and former high school teacher wanted her own students to hear the same kinds of inspiring stories from family, friends and community members. So in 2017, she created an oral history project for college students to interview others and create narratives of their own.





Jennifer Escobar

CHAPTER
Riverside Community College
District Faculty Association

POSITION
Associate professor of English

"I believe that oral history is a wonderful way to engage students in meaningful learning," relates Escobar, an associate professor of English at Moreno Valley College and member of the Riverside Community College District Faculty Association. "It's a way for students to tap into their own network, family and friends. It is a way to introduce researching and interviewing, and to understand how events like immigration, racism and other challenges make people who they are today."

She also believes it can give agency to marginalized communities, as she said when she received a 2017-18 fellowship: "Oral history storytelling has the potential to highlight experiences of people and communities who are misrepresented and underrepresented in order to effect change and promote equity and social justice."

That same year, Escobar broadened her scope and asked a handful of secondary and post-secondary educators in Perris and Moreno Valley to join her work, focused on the Inland Empire.

In 2019, Escobar and four fellow teachers were awarded an \$18,480 grant from CTA's Institute for Teaching that allowed 20 classroom teachers in middle school through college to participate in the "Researching Our Communities Through Oral Histories" project. It continues this school year with an IFT grant of \$7,455. Participating teachers and students are from the community college district and Moreno Valley Unified and Val Verde Unified school districts.

Angelena Tavares, an eighth grade language arts teacher at Mountain View Middle School in Moreno Valley who has participated in the project since the beginning, says that interviewing

family members was an excellent way for her English learners to practice reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

"Many learn about the struggles of their families who came from other countries," says the Moreno Valley Educators Association member. "They learn why their parents value education so much; about their parents' strong work ethic; even how their parents met. They are learning a new respect and appreciation for their own families."

Oral histories can take the form of written essays, photo essays, artwork, poems and videos. Students are encouraged to convert what they learn into "positive action" for social justice, equity and acceptance in their communities.

Plans to share student projects at a community event last spring were halted by the pandemic. Instead, they can be viewed at oralhistoryie.com. The stories are compelling: They include a young woman diagnosed at age 19 with vertigo, and a gay man who was outed to his family.

One of Escobar's students, Josue Sanchez, interviewed his fiancé, who grew up in a religious home, married, divorced his wife and started dating men.

"Too often, we have superficial conversations with the people that we are close to," says Sanchez. "An oral history allows someone to share their story in a very powerful way that touches other people."

Students learn how to ask questions, write narratives, and listen to others. Interviewees feel validated and sometimes unburdened to share stories of the past.

"Sometimes there is sadness in sharing these stories, and sometimes there is great joy," says Escobar. "But one thing is certain: The experience is life-changing."



Wajeha Chaudhry

Read— Alongside on Demand

Wajeha Chaudhry's YouTube channel promotes literacy — and sweet dreams

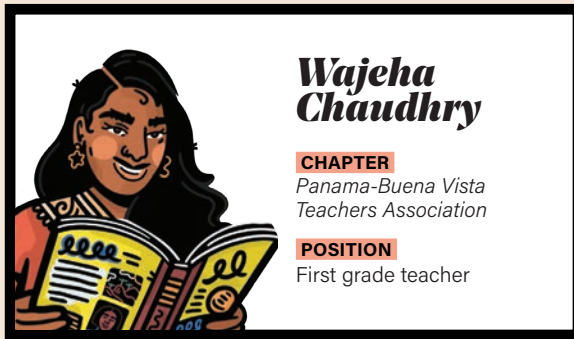


W AJEHA CHAUDHRY

WANTED her students to love reading as much as she does, and also wanted to make it easier

for them to be able to hear a story read aloud daily. So she created her own YouTube channel to read bedtime stories to them, and became an internet sensation with youngsters in her community.

It started in October 2019, when she was teaching third graders at Loudon Elementary School in Bakersfield. And it has continued now that she has transferred to Berkshire Elementary School, where she teaches first grade. (Both schools are in the Panama-Buena Vista Union School District.)



Wajeha Chaudhry reads one of the *Junie B. Jones* books to her growing fan base.



"My reading to their child is one less thing for parents to worry about. It's a way of me saying, 'We're a team, and if you can't do this, I've got your back.'"

"One of the things I love about teaching is the relationships I have with students and their families," says Chaudhry. "It is important for me to connect with them. And I have realized that a lot of them are not reading, through no fault of their own."

Sometimes their parents have been working all day, and they come home to a house full of children and chores and are too exhausted to pull out a book and read to a child, says Chaudhry, a member of the Panama-Buena Vista Teachers Association.

"Parents have so much on their plate, especially in the pandemic. So my reading to their child is one less thing for them to worry about. It's a way of me saying, 'We're a team, and if you can't do this, I've got your back.'"

In the pandemic, it has also been a way to connect more closely with students she has never met face-to-face and only seen on Zoom.

"It's my way of saying goodnight, sweet dreams, and tucking them into bed. It's a way for me to reach every child. It's a way to teach them vocabulary, pronunciation and phonemic awareness."

Chaudhry, Kern County's Teacher of the Year in 2019-20, loves the

comments students leave on YouTube. She says some have pointed out that she skipped a page or a chapter accidentally. This shows they are watching and paying attention. Students she taught years ago also tune in with siblings.

Ashley Shumway, whose daughter Paisley is in Chaudhry's class this year, says her daughter is a big fan of the stories.

"Paisley watches the read-alongs and re-watches them. Her favorite is *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie* [by Laura Numeroff]. Her teacher also reads some of the books I grew up with, the *Junie B. Jones* books [by Barbara Park], which have brought back such good memories from my childhood. We are going through such a hard time these days, and Ms. Chaudhry makes it easier. She is a great teacher outside of her read-alongs, too. I love that she is so patient."

Chaudhry was born in Lahore, Pakistan. Her mother and grandparents were professors. "They always said, 'A good education is something that nobody could ever take away from you.'"

She was so thrilled when she began her first teaching job that she called her

parents (who now live in Bakersfield) to say, "I get paid to do what I love, how awesome is that!"

She started by creating math videos, because parents were having trouble understanding new ways of doing math. Then she segued into reading videos, which she enjoyed as well. She films herself on her phone on a tripod. When a Spanish-speaking mother said she needed help reading to her child, Chaudhry read books in Spanish on her channel. She plans on reading in other languages as well.

She has often sought community members for guest readings, including her own children and a police officer who pulled her over.


"Before the pandemic, I would ask anybody I met to read, including people from my doctor's office, dentist's office, news anchors, the Bakersfield chief of police, the mayor, and fellow teachers," says Chaudhry. "I would drive to their location and film them. Now in the age of COVID-19, I'm thinking they can film themselves and send the readings to me so I can add those to my guest reader playlist."

One of her most rewarding moments came when a third grader who was struggling with reading decided to start her own YouTube channel so she could read aloud to her friends.

"She said, 'Ms. Chaudhry, I need a channel, too.' It was wonderful for me to see a child became so empowered through reading."



Davida Scott, center, with interns involved in Raising Leaders, the program she created.



Davida Scott

CHAPTER
Hayward Education Association

POSITION
Adult school Teacher on Special Assignment

Raising Roses — and Leaders

Davida Scott offers troubled students hope for the future

STUDENTS CALL HER “Ms. Davida” and say she has changed their lives. She calls them “my children” and gets teary-eyed talking about their accomplishments.

They aren’t typical students. They have been in the criminal justice system, foster care and homeless shelters. Many are parents. All of them grew up in poverty and were unable to succeed in traditional school due to tough circumstances and behavioral issues.

Other adults may have given up on them, but fifth-year educator Davida Scott sees her students as success stories waiting to happen. And thanks to her efforts, many are becoming success stories. She changes lives by teaching employment

skills, connecting youths with city leaders, offering internships that lead to careers, and being a support system.

Scott is a teacher on special assignment at Hayward Adult School. Nearly three years ago, she created Raising Leaders, a series of eight weekly workshops for students who attend Hayward Adult School, Brenkwitz Continuation School and Burke Academy for parenting students.

The workshops focus on employability skills, financial awareness, career exploration and educational opportunities. Guest speakers include civic leaders, judges, nurses, firefighters, California Highway Patrol officers (who teach their Start Smart young driver program), Comerica Bank executives, and others who share personal stories of overcoming challenges. Students receive five school credits, updated résumés and 16 hours of community service upon completion, along with the opportunity to interview for a paid internship.

“Raising Leaders teaches life skills while simultaneously preparing the next generation of workforce members in our community,” says Scott, a member of the Hayward Education Association.

Raising Leaders has expanded and now serves 240 students in Alameda County with 164 paid internships in departments from Alameda County, local cities, and CSU East Bay. Students also participate in the Hayward Adopt-A-Block program, picking up trash on 25 blocks that Raising Leaders has adopted.

Workshops and internships are funded through the Alameda County Probation Department and Alameda County Supervisor Richard Valle’s District 2 Youth Initiative. Over the past year, Scott raised nearly \$800,000 from local government and private donors to expand services. Going online during the pandemic allowed more students to enroll.

Ms. Davida, indeed, is making a difference.

“Without her, I’d be in jail,” says Brenda Gomez,

“When I see students hopeful about their future and becoming confident, it’s priceless. Nobody can take that away from them.”

who was on juvenile probation when she was referred to Scott’s program. “I was gang affiliated and up to no good. I didn’t go to school. Ms. Davida was always there for me. She told me to never let my past define me.”

Gomez, who had a child at 19, credits Scott with helping her graduate from high school as a fifth-year senior enrolled in independent studies. Scott took her to visit the local community college, and she enrolled. In June, Gomez will receive her bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from CSU East Bay, becoming Scott’s first student to graduate from a four-year college. She serves on the Hayward Police Commission.

A 15-year-old student living in a homeless shelter says Scott inspires her to stay focused on her online classes and think of the future.

“It has been hard living in a shelter, but Ms. Davida tells me I’m not going to be here forever, and that I should wake up early every morning, go to my sister’s place and do my studies. Her workshops have inspired me to go to college and start my own business someday.”

Yahya Elshawarbi graduated last

June from Brenkwitz Continuation School. Through Raising Leaders, he was appointed to the Hayward Youth Commission and will have an internship with the Hayward Fire Department. He is enrolled at Chabot College and plans on becoming a firefighter, now that he has lost 100 pounds.

“Ms. Davida literally saved my life,” he says. “She’s the kind of teacher you see in movies. I was going through some very tough times. My parents were divorcing, I was moving into a new home after being evicted again. If it wasn’t for her, I’d weigh 400 pounds.”

Scott inspired Elshawarbi with the line, “Even roses grow from concrete,” and he is proud to be one of her success stories.

Scott is a success story herself. She was expelled from Hayward High School at 15. She moved in with her sister, who was a case manager of a nonprofit that helped youth find summer jobs, and became an intern in that program. She liked helping others

so much that she went back to high school and then earned her credential to teach adult education through the University of San Diego.

“I know firsthand what it’s like to be a troubled student, and that’s what inspired me to build this legacy,” says Scott. “I won’t let people tell me no when it comes to creating opportunities for our children. When I see students hopeful about their future and becoming confident, it’s priceless. Nobody can take that away from them.”

She has lost 20 students over the course of her career. Twelve were charged with murder, one committed suicide, and the rest were murdered. She dedicates her program to them.

“I knew I had to build a model that served our children who were most at risk,” says Scott. “I tell my students ‘The change starts with us.’ We need to be the change we want to see in our communities.” ■



Davida Scott



At left, content from “Oral Histories of the Inland Empire” (oralhistoryie.com), a project that received CTA IFT grants in 2019 and 2020. See story on innovator Jennifer Escobar on page 25 for more.

KNOW AN INNOVATOR? WE’RE ALWAYS looking to showcase student-centered work of extraordinarily creative, resourceful educators. Let us know at editor@cta.org (put “Innovator” in the subject line).

In fact, CTA’s Institute for Teaching (IFT) supports educator innovation and great ideas through dues-funded, competitive grants awarded directly to members and local chapters. All CTA members are eligible to apply for an Educator grant (up to \$5,000) or an Impact grant (up to \$20,000). Apply at cta.org/ift.

Take advantage of IFT grant-writing webinars and “office hours” to help shape, refine and review your proposal: Jan. 7 and Feb. 4, 2021, 3:30–5 p.m. RSVP at cta.org/ift.

One of Kathleen Loyd's students points to his astronaut photo.



A Path to the Future

How educators can help students experiencing chronic trauma

By **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**
Photos by **Kim Sanford**

This story was reported and photographed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

KYLE IS A SOPHOMORE. His father struggles with substance abuse and has been in and out of prison. His mother died a year ago. Kyle, who witnessed domestic violence with his parents, has been evicted and is currently homeless. He is fearful of what will happen next in his life.

"It's hard to concentrate," he shares. "I'm pretending that everything is OK. It's hard to share my feelings. I feel that whatever I say doesn't matter to anyone."

Kyle is among students in California who have experienced chronic trauma — trauma that is repetitive over time and includes homelessness, abandonment, neglect, violence, abuse and bullying.

Symptoms of chronic trauma include lack of focus, loss of self-esteem, difficulty engaging with others, and

being either overly emotional or unemotional, says Giniena Tan, a school psychologist trained in trauma-informed practices at Cerro Villa Middle School in Orange Unified School District.

"We are seeing a lot more of this in our schools, at younger ages, and it certainly impacts their academics and social-emotional well-being," says Tan, a member of Orange Unified Education Association. "For students lacking resiliency skills, it impacts how they function at school. Their grades suffer. Their relationships suffer. There is anger and depression. They don't feel safe."

Despite the negative impacts, there are ways educators can help students dealing with chronic trauma and set them or keep them on a path to learning and growth. Here are a few.

Aliza Cruz teaches at a school for students who are homeless.



1. Let them know you care

KYLE ATTENDS Monarch School in San Diego, a K-12 school for students who are homeless. Most students experience chronic trauma, say staff.

“We have students who have been homeless for years and students who were middle-class but experienced a big shift and became suddenly homeless,” says Aliza Cruz, a high school science teacher at Monarch. “There are victims of sexual abuse, students exposed to drug and alcohol use from adults, and students suffering addiction themselves.”

The best way for teachers to help students experiencing chronic trauma, including homelessness, is showing caring and compassion and fostering relationships with them, says Cruz, a member of San Diego County Association of Educators. “A lot of them feel it’s them against the world, and they hold you at arm’s length. But once they make that connection to you, they trust you deeply and are very loyal. It takes work and effort to build that trust. You have to take the time to get to know them as individuals.”

It also means checking your assumptions at the door. For example, a student confided to her that at another school, a teacher refused to accept a handwritten essay the student had written under a streetlamp, because the teacher thought the student was too lazy to type.

“You have to refer these students to resources such as counseling, one-to-one tutoring or sports. Don’t lower your expectations for them, because it is doing them a disservice. Help them understand that they have strengths and a future, and they have power and a voice.

“The biggest thing I hear is that these students feel they don’t matter. You have to let them know that they do.”

“The biggest thing I hear is that these students feel they don’t matter. You have to let them know that they do.”



Kathleen Loyd instills a feeling of family with her kindergarten students.

2. Understand the culture of trauma

KATHLEEN LOYD, a kindergarten teacher at Monarch and San Diego County Association of Educators member, has heard 5-year-olds talk about drug deals, seeing their parents get high, physical abuse, and parental incarceration like it was no big deal.

“The trauma they’ve experienced definitely

affects their behavior and overall quality of life,” says Loyd. “There is a culture to homelessness that nobody really speaks about. There are norms, rules and expectations that people engage in when living among a homeless population.

“For example, many mothers expect their children to physically fight and defend themselves against others. In the

“I show them repeatedly that they can trust me, so they can switch from a survival culture to a culture of learning.”



Kelli Clayton gets her students in the mood to learn and have fun.

Continued from p. 31

culture of survival, fighting means they get a meal or get to keep a new backpack. If there is an unguarded toy or food or other necessity, the expectation may be for them to take it. It's very different from how school functions — and the expectations of our society."

At school, Loyd teaches the culture of equity.

"I let them know that everyone will get a meal. I show them repeatedly that they can trust me with things such as hurt feelings and taking care of their needs, so they can switch from a survival culture to a culture of learning. I instill a feel of family in my classroom where we are all on the same team and look out for each other. I focus on kindness and teaching them to do the same. This opens them up and they blossom. This is when they are finally ready to learn."

Loyd says teaching children who are traumatized requires the right amount of empathy and expectations.

"We teach children how to solve and conquer their problems, not to use their problems as an excuse to sit and do nothing. And teachers should not give up on the parents. They are a huge part of a child's education. We may not approve of the choices they make, but their involvement means the world to these students."



3. Don't take it personally

TALKING WITH STUDENTS about trauma comes naturally to Kelli Clayton, a first grade teacher at Reese Elementary in Sacramento.

"My family has dealt with poverty, substance abuse and incarceration. I've been a ward of the court. It has made me a better educator and taught me things no textbook can teach. If a child tells me they didn't sleep because they heard their parents arguing, I share how that made me feel as a little girl and ask them how they feel. I'm very authentic with students."

Clayton, an Elk Grove Education Association member, received trauma-informed training from HEARTS (Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools) through UC San Francisco, which has been invaluable at her Title I school.

"If a child lashes out at me, I now understand it's not reflective of how

they feel about me personally. If something happens, we don't pretend it didn't. We have discussions in circle time."

A "peace corner" allows students to take a short break if they are feeling stress. Students take "brain breaks," such as pretending they are trees shaking their leaves, to reduce tension.

"I think the practices I have put into place have been very positive. My students feel confident that regardless of what's happening at home, they have my love, support and respect at school. Students are

learning how to self-regulate before they explode. Asking if they can have a brain break or go to the peace corner are great examples."

"My students feel confident that regardless of what's happening at home, they have my love, support and respect at school."

Alli McCart holds PEACE project papers and props that students have written.



4. Foster empathy

ALLI MCCART TEACHES fourth graders at John Morse Therapeutic Center, a school for students who have emotional disturbances. Many suffer from chronic trauma, says the Sacramento City Teachers Association member.

"They have dealt with heavy life experiences I don't think the average adult could handle. Home life for my students ranges from living with family to extended family, appointed guardians and foster care. Some have experienced grief, neglect, abuse and PTSD. Some were bullied at another school and started displaying bullying behavior."

Behaviors include crying, anger, yelling, shutting down and depression. However, McCart learned that projects that foster empathy improve behavior, self-image and academics.

She created the PEACE Project (Positivity, Encouragement and Compassion Everyday), which asks students to write positive notes to peers and staff members. Notes range from "I like your shoes" to "I saw you crying this morning and I'm hoping your day gets better." This expanded

to PEACE props, where students give each other a "shout-out" in the cafeteria for doing something positive, like helping someone who fell down, solving a problem or telling the truth.

"When students get into an argument, we stop and refer back to the PEACE Project. We have a 'think sheet' where kids work through problems," McCart says. "They write down what happened, what they were feeling and thinking, and how they could have changed things for the better."

Her students sent PEACE papers with encouraging words to wildfire victims and students in Parkland, Florida, the site of a school shooting. Students make blankets for medically fragile babies and children experiencing hard times. Helping students focus on helping others has improved the overall campus atmosphere.

"Many said they never knew they had the ability to make someone else feel happy. They are absolutely amazed by this."

"Many students said they never knew they had the ability to make someone else feel happy. They are absolutely amazed by this."

Jessica MacCaskey and Jennifer Ortiz co-teach 10th graders.



5. Focus on the future

*Would you prefer one marshmallow now?
Or wait an hour and have two?*

IT SOUNDS LIKE a trivial question, but it's not, explain co-teachers Jessica MacCaskey and Jennifer Ortiz to 10th graders at Anaheim High School.

In the famous "marshmallow test," Stanford researchers followed participants for decades. Children who waited patiently for the second marshmallow were more successful in life — with higher education and incomes and happier marriages — because they could delay gratification.

Resource teacher MacCaskey and English teacher Ortiz co-teach students of differing abilities near Disneyland, the so-called happiest place on earth. Many students — mostly Hispanic and born into generational poverty — have experienced chronic trauma and are at risk for dropping out, joining gangs and risky behavior.

The Anaheim Secondary Teachers Association members have embraced new strategies to help students focus on long-term goals. They ask students to understand how traumatic events negatively impact them and explore positive ways of coping. It's done through building community, relatable literature, essays and humor. Students are less truant and try harder, which makes it all worthwhile.

Continued on p. 34





“We are seeing a lot more [chronic trauma] in our schools. It certainly impacts [students’] academics and social-emotional well-being.”

—Giniena Tan, Orange Unified Education Association

Continued from p. 33

One assignment asked students to share a core memory and how that event shaped them into who they are today. Students wrote stories of abandonment, abuse and loss. The teachers talked with some students individually, referring some to counselors. Students began to trust their teachers, open up and became more vulnerable and empathetic.

When they read *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* by Sherman Alexie, where the protagonist copes with adversity and poverty, students were willing to evaluate what was happening in their own world, discuss positive choices, and create “action plans” to help break generational poverty within their community. Other teachers and administrators have shared personal stories of overcoming hardships.

“I always thought adults who worked here had perfect lives,” says one student. “But knowing they have gone through hard times — like I have — gives me hope.”

For more about MacCaskey and Ortiz’s strategies, see page 36. ■



Shelter at school: Nick Chandler, social worker at Buena Vista Horace Mann K-8 School in San Francisco, was instrumental in the school’s decision in November 2018 to open a shelter in the gym to help homeless families. The Stay Over Program has continued during the pandemic. “Students who are chronically homeless are not rested,” says the United Educators of San Francisco member. “They are under stress, and cortisol levels in their brain are raised, so they are in fight-or-flight mode instead of learning mode.”

Expert Insights

Jamie Howard, director of the Trauma and Resilience Service at the Child Mind Institute in New York, offers suggestions on when and how to help students experiencing chronic trauma.

When is intervention needed?

If you notice functional impairment — students aren’t able to focus on schoolwork, make and keep friends, and engage in activities they enjoy — make a referral to a counselor or mental health professional who can do assessment and offer coping strategies. When in doubt, make a referral.

How can educators help?

It’s important to view behavior through a trauma lens. Instead of saying “Why is this student so oppositional?” ask “Why is he behaving this way?” Instead of saying “She’s uninterested in school,” ask “Why isn’t this student as engaged as she used to be?” Rather than presume a student is uninterested or noncompliant, consider that something else may be going on.

A compassionate response helps draw kids out. Saying something like “I notice you are having trouble concentrating” makes a student more likely to share what’s going on, rather than saying “You need to start paying attention.” Don’t take student behavior personally. It can look like someone is a bad kid, but the truth is they are a good kid who has been through something bad.

Teaching
Through
Trauma

SPECIAL REPORT

→ **EDITOR’S NOTE:** This story is part of our series on how educators are handling students with trauma, stemming from natural disasters, poverty, the pandemic and more. Read the series at cta.org/educator/posts/special-report-teaching-through-trauma.

We See You

New report finds increasing numbers of homeless students in California

By Julian Peoples



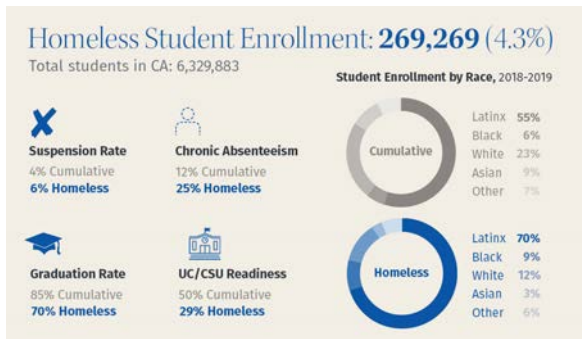
MORE THAN 269,000 California K-12 students are homeless — 4.3 percent of all students — and 4 million are “economically disadvantaged,” while federal, state and local agencies lack the resources and capacity to support their unique needs, according to “State of Crisis: Dismantling Student Homelessness in California,” a new report released in October by the Center for the Transformation of Schools (CTS) at UCLA. (View the report at transformschoools.ucla.edu/stateofcrisis.)

Over the past decade, the number of K-12 students experiencing homelessness has increased by more than 48 percent. California college students are also experiencing significant impacts of poverty and inequality at astounding rates — 1 in 5 community college students, 1 in 10 California State University students, and 1 in 20 University of California students have experienced homelessness in the last year.

“We have to act boldly, unapologetically, and in ways that are centered around our young people.”

—Tyrone Howard, faculty director, UCLA Center for the Transformation of Schools

“Broader awareness about the unique needs of the population of students experiencing homelessness can help improve educational outcomes,” the report states. “By highlighting the perspectives of students who experience homelessness, this report can potentially catalyze sustained and strategic action among policymakers, educators and concerned citizens to ameliorate this growing crisis.”



More than 269,000 California students are homeless and another 4 million are “economically disadvantaged.”





Ortiz, left, and MacCaskey, right, created a classroom that flourished with inclusiveness and laughter.

The CTS report includes seven key findings:

1. Current professional capacity to support students experiencing homelessness is inadequate: comprehensive, targeted and coordinated training is needed.
2. Homeless liaisons are struggling to effectively respond to growing needs in their community, requiring more resources and staffing.
3. The prevalence of Latinx and Black students experiencing homelessness requires more racially and culturally responsive strategies in education practice and policy.
4. Students experiencing homelessness are often overlooked or misunderstood in school settings, which can result in negative educational experiences.
5. Better coordination is needed between child welfare, housing and education stakeholders to alleviate barriers for students and families.
6. Community-based organizations and nonprofits provide a critical function as part of an ecosystem of support for students and can get resources to families quickly.
7. The bookends of education, early education and higher education, are an essential part of a coordinated response to student homelessness, from cradle to college.

The report also discusses the impacts of the COVID-19 public health crisis on students who are homeless and the critical role schools play in providing support. Finding students in need is even more difficult during the pandemic — another report identified nearly 30 percent less students who are homeless than last year, increasing concerns that many are falling through the cracks.

How Educators Can Keep the Focus on Learning

Jennifer Ortiz

WE ASKED OUR 10th grade English students to write about a core memory, experiences that had deeply impacted them. Nearly half of our 188 students wrote about having endured trauma. Their memories included homelessness, extreme poverty, neglect and abuse. One of our students shared how his family had been homeless for the last year, moving from family member to family member and in and out of motels. As with the rest of our students, this gave us great insight into his life and gave a new meaning to his failing grades and numerous suspensions.

Our job is to teach English, but how do you get a student to care about Shakespeare or argumentative essays when their basic human needs are not being met? Why should they care about making sure they are “a-g” eligible if they don’t know where they are going to sleep that night?

Jessica and I saw a great opportunity to broaden our scope of practice to meet the diverse academic, social and mental health needs of our students, and we took it upon ourselves to do quite a bit of research and soul searching to feel confident and qualified to do so.

One observation we made when executing trauma-informed instruction was our students’ use of maladaptive coping strategies to deal with their traumas. Their gravitation toward self-soothing by misuse/abuse of alcohol and drugs, disassociating with excessive screen time, poor eating and sleeping patterns, and self-harm resulted in severe disengagement from school. We wanted to do our part, as the adults that see them daily, to help heal some of the pain that was hindering their ability to learn.

“How do you get a student to care about Shakespeare or argumentative essays when their basic human needs are not being met?”

HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH teacher Jennifer Ortiz and resource specialist Jessica MacCaskey, who co-teach at Anaheim High School, deal with students experiencing chronic trauma on a daily basis. The pair spoke at the “State of Crisis” press conference about changing their approaches and strategies to connect with students. Below, their edited comments.

Jessica MacCaskey

FOR THESE STUDENTS, Anaheim High is the one constant in their lives. We wanted to create a safe and caring environment where they feel comfortable self-reporting trauma and adversities. So, we created a classroom culture that flourished with inclusiveness, acceptance, vulnerability and a lot of laughter.

We held dance party Fridays and pulled a gigantic speaker into the hallway every passing period, encouraging students to

“Putting time and energy into addressing traumas that have held students back creates a classroom culture that allows students to focus on learning and reach their utmost potential.”

recognize the ability music, dance and laughter have to decrease anxiety. We read stories and novels about characters who faced and overcame adversity and articles about effective coping strategies. And we invited fellow Anaheim teachers and administrators to come share their own childhood experiences with homelessness, poverty and generational trauma. We, along with our students, were moved to tears by their willingness to share their stories.

Afterwards, our students opened up to us even more, having felt the overwhelming support of their peers and teachers. Our student who wrote about how severely homelessness was impacting his ability to learn wrote a moving thank-you letter. He started putting more effort in his classes and advocating for the help he needed. [Focusing] on his social-emotional needs resulted in a marked improvement in his grades.

This experience has forever changed our teaching practices, and we have come to realize that putting time and energy into addressing the traumas that have held our students back creates a classroom culture that allows our students to focus on their learning and reach their utmost potential.



MacCaskey and Ortiz hold “Dance Party Fridays” in the school hallway.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated many of the preexisting inequities present for students and families profoundly impacted by poverty and inequality in California,” the “State of Crisis” report states.

The report authors (Bishop, Lorena Camargo Gonzalez and Edwin Rivera) make a series of policy recommendations for all levels of government, from federal to school districts, noting that coordination is necessary because no one government agency has the resources or reach to be effective working in isolation. At the local level, the report recommends:

- Ensuring that school district resources for students experiencing homelessness are aligned with Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) goals and taking into account the likely amount of need.
- Encouraging the development of districtwide strategies for identifying and serving students experiencing homelessness so that responsibility does not fall solely upon the district’s homeless liaison.
- Adopting a Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) framework to organize schools around the needs of students experiencing homelessness; and reducing suspensions that disproportionately impact students with housing insecurity and students of color, and embracing alternative strategies to punitive discipline approaches.

“An aggressive response ... should include policy actions at the local, state and federal level to address the student homelessness crisis,” the report states. “Key decision-makers from the public and private sector, including students, educators and lawmakers, must work together to make the best use of limited resources in the face of a growing challenge.” ■



Left, Jill Biden speaks at a virtual NEA/AFT event in November. Below, Biden with NEA President Becky Pringle.



Educator in the White House

Jill Biden ready to work to “build back better” By Julian Peeples

AFTER FOUR YEARS of defending students and public schools from near-constant threat, educators will celebrate one of our own moving into the White House on Jan. 20, when community college professor and NEA member Jill Biden becomes first lady and her husband, Joseph R. Biden, Jr., is inaugurated as the 46th president of the United States.

Educators nationwide are filled with hope about the future for public schools with a president who understands the promise of public education and a first lady who has dedicated her life to fulfilling it. After four years of battling a U.S. secretary of education who openly worked to dismantle public education, NEA President Becky Pringle said, educators are eager and excited to work with President and First Lady Biden.

“With Joe, we get Jill,” Pringle said in an interview before the election. “She understands how we have to have that authority and respect to do the jobs that we were professionally trained to do.”

Jill Biden’s status as a working educator won’t be past-tense — she intends to be the first ever in her position to also hold a day job, continuing to teach English at Northern Virginia Community College. It’s this real-world educator’s point of view that will help inform and shape education policy in the Biden administration, which promises to triple Title I funds for schools in high-need areas, provide districts with the resources needed to hire more student support staff like school

counselors and school nurses, and name an educator as the next U.S. secretary of education.

“Educators, this is our moment! We’re going to build back better,” Jill Biden says. “No one knows what our schools need now more than the people who are with students every day — and that’s us!”

With President-elect Biden and California’s own Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, educators across the United States will again have advocates and leaders who believe in public education, understand the challenges currently facing educators, and are willing to provide the resources necessary to protect the health of school communities and build the public schools that all students deserve. Among Jill Biden’s priorities for the near term: addressing food insecurity issues created by the COVID-19 pandemic and technological inequities that are impacting the ability of many students to take part in distance learning.

On the campaign trail, Jill Biden connected with educators across the country at virtual events, taking time to learn about their stories and concerns. During a meeting thanking NEA and the American Federation of Teachers for their tireless support during the

campaign, she acknowledged how different this year has been for educators — especially those navigating distance learning as both teachers and parents.

“This year has been so difficult, but I have never been prouder to be an educator,” she said. “I’m ready to get to work with you. Thank you for your faith in Joe, me, and in the future we are going to build together.” ■

“No one knows what our schools need now more than the people who are with students every day — and that’s us!”

—Future First Lady and professor
Jill Biden



MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

Visit cta.org/takeaction and sign our petition asking state education officials to request a federal waiver.

Then, visit fairtest.org and sign the petition calling on the federal Department of Education to suspend testing nationwide.

A Call to Waive 2021 Assessments

CTA, educators say standardized tests would be detrimental to students, of little use to schools

By Julian Peebles

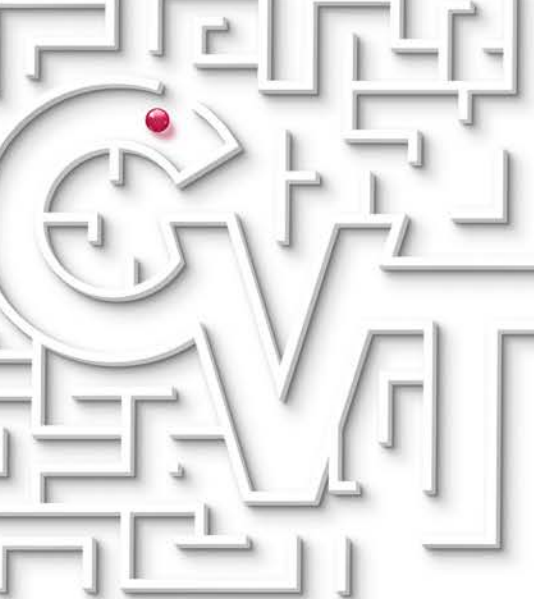
AS EDUCATORS CONTINUE to go above and beyond to reach, teach and protect school communities during extraordinary circumstances, CTA is calling for a waiver on standardized tests that would negatively impact students and be of little use to schools.

In comments submitted to California State Board of Education President Linda Darling-Hammond, CTA President E. Toby Boyd asked state officials to suspend the California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) in spring 2021. He cited widespread inequities in student access

to technology and the internet, as well as concerns about the validity of data gathered during these tests forced online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“CTA recommends that to truly meet California’s diverse needs, the state must pursue a waiver from standardized testing. Otherwise, we risk perpetuating the vast inequities in our state,” Boyd said, noting that educators don’t need assessments to figure out what students need. “The only purpose of statewide assessments is to compare results across the state, which does nothing to help





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CTA's Stance on Assessments

CTA believes assessments should be used to inform instruction and improve student learning. They are not meant to label students or schools. State tests must be age- and subject-appropriate, and must be free from cultural, racial, gender, socioeconomic and linguistic biases. A true reflection of student achievement and improvement is always done through multiple measures and can never focus on just one test score.

Parents Can Choose to Opt Out

While state officials have yet to act on suspending testing for this spring, all parents and guardians still have the right to opt their students out of standardized assessments. California Education Code 60615 allows parents and guardians to submit written requests to school officials to excuse their students from state-mandated tests. Specific details are available from each school district. There are no consequences for opting out of testing.

identify individual student successes or learning gaps. State tests are about accountability and district/school-level planning, not students."

The call to suspend standardized testing comes as the State Board of Education approved in November the development of short forms for some assessments but stopped short of requesting a waiver. The Betsy DeVos-led U.S. Department of Education (ED) has repeatedly denied such requests from states, and California officials are moving forward with assessment plans as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) — though federal guidance is expected to change when the Biden administration takes office on Jan. 20. Boyd is hopeful that the new secretary of education will agree with educators.

"Conducting standardized testing in spring would be detrimental to students and of limited use to teachers, schools and school districts," Boyd said. "Forcing students to complete and educators to administer tests that weren't developed for a distance-learning environment serves no real useful purpose."

Vast numbers of California students still lack internet access and the necessary equipment to reliably participate in distance learning, let alone take lengthy online tests. Continuing with business as usual on testing will exacerbate existing inequities and add even more obstacles for students who already have too many. These tests also require the use of secure internet browsers, which would need to be installed on devices for every student — a logistical feat for any school district. And there's the simple fact that nothing is standard about the environments in which these tests would be completed.

"On any given day, and under the best circumstances, test scores alone fail to tell us how a child is doing and where they need improvement," Boyd said. "We need to focus our time and energy on meeting the challenges of the distance

4

Students are making a model to show some cycles in a lake habitat. Their unfinished model is shown.

The students want to show one way oxygen is added to the water. The students need to put an arrow on the diagram pointing from one source that produces oxygen. What is the source of the oxygen?

- Ⓐ cloud
- Ⓑ duck
- Ⓒ fish
- Ⓓ plant

learning environment, narrowing the digital divide, and fulfilling the needs of all students — not forcing tests on our kids during a health crisis.”

CTA is supportive of the exclusion of the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) from the waiver since it is used to reclassify students from “English learner” to “English proficient,” opening

“Forcing students to complete tests that weren’t developed for a distance-learning environment serves no real useful purpose.”

—CTA President E. Toby Boyd

the door to more advanced courses. In late November, the ED announced the suspension of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) because of concerns about health and safety, and whether the data would be usable.

As educators nationwide add their names and voices to a [fairtest.org](https://www.fairtest.org) petition calling for the suspension of testing, you can rise with those here in California to defend students and focus our combined efforts on supporting them during this extraordinary time. Visit cta.org/takeaction and sign CTA’s petition imploring state education officials to request a federal waiver.

“The COVID pandemic has shined a light on inequity in our communities,” Boyd says. “It’s time to stop just pointing out these disparities and to start putting energy into creating equitable opportunity for our students.” ■

What Is the CAASPP System?

California Assessment of Student Performance and Progress (CAASPP) is the state’s system of mandated and optional assessments. It currently includes three types of mandated tests: Smarter Balanced Assessments, California Alternate Assessments, and California Science Assessments. The Smarter Balanced Assessments are in English language arts and mathematics for grades 3-8 and 11. For more information on CAASPP, visit cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ca.

TAKING FLIGHT

The Nadine Ramsey Story

Raquel Ramsey & Tricia Aurand
Foreword by Major General Jeannie M. Leavitt, USAF

The inspiring story of a girl from Depression-era Kansas who overcame tremendous challenges and defied convention to become an elite pilot—one of the few American women to fly fighter aircraft during World War II.



“*Taking Flight*, Nadine Ramsey’s story, is more than the tale of her days as a WASP pilot ferrying high-priority army aircraft across the skies of wartime America. It is the heartfelt account of her family and its collective grit, patriotism, and raw courage. We learn of Nadine’s painful recovery from an early plane crash, the healing that allowed her to fly as a WASP, and finally her battle against the recurring pain in later life. A good read and a ton of great research.”
—Sarah Byrn Rickman, author of *The Originals: The Women’s Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron of World War II and WASP of the Ferry Command: Women Pilots, Uncommon Deeds*

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Returning to Our Schools

CTA urges communities, locals to follow the science

By **Frank Wells**

WHEN IS IT SAFE for educators and students to return to school campuses? That is the question CTA members, local chapters and the districts where they work have been grappling with since the explosion of the COVID-19 pandemic in March. While local circumstances and decisions have varied throughout the state, CTA has remained steadfast in its position that science and safety should lead the way back to in-person instruction.

But faced with a virus that we learn more about every day — and as the CDC changes its policies in response — it's difficult for local chapters and school districts to know the best way forward.

“Our hearts go out to the students and families facing enormous challenges because of the pandemic, from the digital divide to financial issues to everyday life disruptions. Teachers *want* to return to in-person instruction, and we know our students do as well,” says CTA President E. Toby Boyd.

“CTA supports districts and communities that follow the science in determining when it's safe to go back. We must make sure our communities look at the same science and data and involve all stakeholders, including educators with their knowledge of school life and student behavior. To do otherwise is irresponsible, and puts the lives of our students, families, educators and communities at risk.”

A statewide poll conducted in September shows an overwhelming majority of parents agree. Over 80 percent said that the safety of students and staff should be the top concern when reopening schools. A strong majority (89 percent) said that schools should remain in either remote learning or a hybrid model, with a slight majority saying schools should remain physically closed completely (see cta.org/covid-19 for full poll results).

It will take money to put effective safety measures in place, and CTA has continued to push at both the state and federal levels for funding needed to reopen schools safely. Unfortunately, the stalling of the HEROES Act in the Senate and the narrow defeat of Proposition 15 have sidelined two potential sources of

relief. Still, the current Congress may approve some scaled-down relief package, and President-elect Biden is pledging to push for more after he assumes office.

Despite funding shortfalls and lack of consistent statewide testing and other protocols, some communities have come together to address solutions. The San Diego Education Association partnered with UC San Diego to develop an ambitious program that would regularly test all 100,000 district students and 15,000 staff members. Additional district measures include plexiglass separating students in classrooms who sit at every other desk. (Due to worsening city and county coronavirus numbers, San Diego Unified announced it is pushing back the expansion of in-person instruction until after the first of the year.)

School districts are sometimes caught between what communities want and what is scientifically sound. In Manhattan Beach, parents rallied in November to urge Los Angeles County to allow district schools to physically reopen grades 3-6, contrary to state and county guidelines. In October the county lifted a requirement for union sign-off on waivers to school-related COVID-19 guidelines, and while Manhattan Beach Unified

Teachers Association had approved an initial waiver, the union has concerns that the district is moving ahead without its consent with new changes as the first waiver expires.

“We learned that assurances made aren't always the reality,” says MBUTA President Shawn Chen. “Members would show up to

work having been promised basic PPE, Clorox wipes and other measures, and were told they were on back order. We've had some teachers with health concerns indicate they'll just have to take a leave. Others don't have the banked sick leave or financial wherewithal to do that, even if they have underlying conditions or at-risk family members.”

CTA has heard from other chapters where members have resigned or prematurely retired out of genuine fear for their own health or that of loved ones.

With multiple vaccines on the horizon, there is light at the end of the tunnel, but as cases continue to surge, districts, educators, parents and communities should follow the science so that schools can reopen as soon as it's safe and possible.

For an expanded version of this story, go to cta.org/return. ■

SINCE MARCH CTA has been vocal in urging science and safety in decision-making around schools and communities. Go to cta.org/covid-19 for CTA recommendations made to California lawmakers and other resources, facts and tools in the fight against COVID-19.

Voters Elect Biden to Move Forward Together

The struggle continues for resources schools and communities need **By Julian Peeples**

AMERICANS VOTED in record numbers in November for experienced leadership to help guide us through unprecedented crises, electing Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as the next president and vice president of the United States.

Their historic election capped a unique 2020 campaign that saw Americans dancing in the streets upon the announcement of Biden's election but brought disappointment here in California. The fight to put schools and communities first came oh-so-close but fell just short, with Proposition 15 failing by a 2 percent margin. The bid for property tax fairness was closer than anyone expected, despite a deep-pocketed misinformation campaign by opponents desperate to keep their tax loophole.

Prop. 15 would have brought in nearly \$12 billion annually for schools and essential public services.

CTA President E. Toby Boyd thanked members for energizing the Prop. 15 campaign, making nearly 400,000 phone calls, sending a quarter-million texts, and fighting with the heart of 310,000 educators for the schools and services our students and families deserve.

"CTA members were the wings of this campaign, powering Prop. 15 to within a couple hundred thousand votes of changing California schools for all students," Boyd says. "My pride for what we were able to accomplish together far outshines my disappointment in the result. We went toe-to-toe with the wealthiest corporations in the world in the midst of a global pandemic, showing that we can match their mountains of cash with grass-roots organizing, coalition building, and the inspiring fight of educators who believe that we can do better for our students and communities."

Boyd notes the fiscal challenges ahead: "The fight for much-needed funding for equitable resources continues as our schools and communities face billions in devastating budget cuts."

Other California results

In other election results that defied California's progressive reputation, two high-profile initiative races ended with setbacks: the failure of Prop. 16, which would have repealed the ban on affirmative action, and the passage of Prop. 22, allowing the continued exploitation of workers by gig companies like Uber and Lyft, which spent \$225 million on their campaign.

"We are never going to stop demanding fair wages, health care benefits, and rights for all workers on the job," Boyd says in response to Prop. 22's approval.

CTA's other two initiative positions split, with voters rejecting Prop. 20's prison spending scam, but also turning down Prop. 25's proposal to end cash bail. Nearly all of CTA's recommended state Assembly and Senate candidates were victorious on Election Day. For a full list of results, go to cta.org/election.

CTA members running for school board seats were widely successful across the state. The winners (14 at press time) include Lucy Ugarte, who defeated the incumbent board president in Chula Vista; Ken Tang, who won

a tight contest in Alhambra; Carolyn Torres, who came in first in a field of six in Santa Ana; and VanCedric Williams, who became the first teacher on the Oakland Unified school board in 20 years.

"Thank you to everyone who supported the campaign and everyone who voted, walked, phoned, texted and participated in our democracy," says Ever Flores, who won election to the Santa Rosa City Schools board. "I will continue to advocate for better, more equitable and more accessible education, and greater teacher support. We cannot let this slide. Our students need more from us. Our students deserve more from us."

Looking ahead

After four years protecting public education from what seemed like constant attack by Betsy DeVos, the election



"We look forward to working with the Biden-Harris administration as we prioritize safely reopening schools for in-person teaching and learning."

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**

of Biden is the dawn of a new era for public schools with a president who believes in the value of education and is ready to invest in opportunity for all students.

“For America’s educators, this is a great day: You’re going to have one of your own in the White House,” Biden said of his wife, educator and NEA member Jill Biden, during his Nov. 7 victory speech.

Biden has committed to appointing an educator to replace DeVos as secretary of education, with former NEA President Lily Eskelsen García on the early

“For America’s educators, this is a great day: You’re going to have one of your own in the White House.”

—President-elect **Joe Biden**, of his wife Jill Biden in his Nov. 7 victory speech

short list of potential selections. Biden has promised much-needed investment in public education — hundreds of billions of dollars for preschool through higher education, as well as funding for schools to deal with COVID-19 expenses.

The administration is already working to provide clear direction on how to physically reopen schools safely.

“We look forward to working with and supporting the Biden-Harris administration as we prioritize safely reopening schools for in-person teaching and learning, and having the resources, testing and necessary safety measures in place to protect our students, educators and communities,” Boyd says.

According to the *Washington Post*, Biden has supported at least \$88 billion to stabilize state education funding and help pay for protective equipment, ventilation systems, class size reduction, and other expenses associated with operating schools during the pandemic. Additionally, the president-elect has promised to triple Title I funding for schools in high-poverty areas; double the number of psychologists, counselors, nurses and social workers in schools; and dramatically increase federal spending for special education.

Biden’s priorities for education include funding universal pre-K for all children ages 3-4 and doubling grants to help low-income students pay for college.

“Our newly elected leaders recognize public education is the very fiber of our democracy and are committed to working alongside educators to ensure America’s students have an equitable, just and adequately funded system that promotes unity through opportunity and inclusivity in our schools and colleges,” Boyd says. ■



See Educators Run (and Win)

The following CTA members were elected or reelected to serve on local school boards.

- GREG BONACCORSI, *Ohlone Community College District*
- DON BRIDGE, *Chino Valley Unified School District*
- CHRIS CRUZ-BOONE, *Bakersfield City School District*
- EVER FLORES, *Santa Rosa City Schools*
- MICHELLE GATES, *National School District*
- MICHAEL GONZÁLES, *New Haven Unified School District*
- DEMETRIO GONZALEZ-HOY, *West Contra Costa Unified School District*
- AMARJIT “AJ” KAUR, *John Swett Unified School District*
- CHRISTOPHER POPE, *Visalia Unified School District*
- ROBERTO RODRIGUEZ, *Palomar Community College District*
- KEN TANG, *Alhambra Unified School District*
- CAROLYN TORRES, *Santa Ana Unified School District*
- LUCY UGARTE, *Chula Vista Elementary School District*
- VANCEDRIC WILLIAMS, *Oakland Unified School District*

If you ran for office and won, email us at editor@cta.org and we’ll add you to the online list.



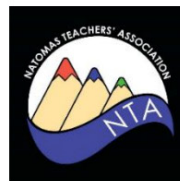
Chris Cruz-Boone, Kern CCD/CCA



Demetrio Gonzalez-Hoy, United Teachers of Richmond

Bargaining Roundup

Compiled by **Julian Peeples**



SACRAMENTO COUNTY:

Rising together for safety

Sacramento County schools cannot reopen unless it is safe to do so. That's the unified call from **11 local educators associations** to ensure the collective health of educators, students and communities.

In a Nov. 18 letter to the county superintendent and chief health officer, chapter presidents urged officials to implement robust COVID-19 testing, tracing and preventative measures before physically reopening schools and exposing Sacramento County communities to health risks. Even as COVID cases spiked, some schools were allowed to physically reopen without the necessary safety protections.

The letter calls on officials to step in and ensure community safety when local leaders won't provide the testing, tracing and transparency that educators, students and their families deserve.

"The lack of testing and robust safety measures is irresponsible and puts not only the lives of our students and staff in danger, but their families and the entire community," says River Delta Unified Teachers Association President Marsha Montgomery.

MARIN COUNTY:

Coalition for healthy schools

Marin Educators for Safe Schools (MESS) is a coalition of 14 CTA locals and three California Federation of Teachers chapters in Marin County, representing more than 1,500 educators. The coalition formed to plan and collaborate to ensure all students have safe and healthy schools in the age of COVID-19.

This summer, the coalition contacted more than 1,000 parents and educators, calling for schools to require at least 6 feet of social distance, mandate personal protective equipment (PPE) and face coverings for all students, educators and school visitors, and guarantee small cohort sizes. The coalition was successful in achieving these safety goals in agreements with nearly every local. Only the Novato Federation of Teachers, a CFT affiliate, continues to negotiate at press time.

The coalition now transitions to educating, equipping and empowering members and local leaders to enforce the agreements reached with districts. It is focused on ensuring that rank-and-file members have the tools and power needed to ensure safe schools through direct collective action and by organizing around grievances and formal complaints. To that end, CTA and CFT staff conducted two nights of trainings, called "Safe Schools Start With You — Stronger Together," reaching members at approximately 50 school sites.

The coalition faces fierce opposition from hostile trustees, highly organized and well-funded parent groups, and most district superintendents and the county superintendent, whose top-down management approach is challenged. But the Marin County locals continue to band together to ensure safe and healthy schools for their students and educators.





BEVERLY HILLS:
Organizing to protect students

Beverly Hills Education Association organized members and three other bargaining units to push back on the school district's plans to physically reopen schools.

The district intended to order all employees to report to their worksites to teach and work, but bargaining unit members successfully organized virtual tactics to pressure the administration and school board to reconsider that proposal and negotiate comprehensive distance learning agreements with all three units.

BHEA followed that victory with successful agreements for special education assessments, small group cohorts and athletics.

SANTA CLARA:
More teacher input

United Teachers of Santa Clara recently completed negotiations with Santa Clara Unified for in-person special education assessments. The bargaining team started negotiations for hybrid learning and teaching (before Santa Clara County moved into the state's purple tier).

UTSC mobilized more than 250 members and 100 email comments to a recent school board meeting to advocate for a stronger safety plan and more teacher input on the hybrid instructional model. Hybrid has now been delayed until January 2021 and will be phased in over a nine-week period, as of press time.

The bargaining team was also negotiating a pilot for small-group instruction based on teacher volunteers, to begin in December. UTSC held two listening sessions with general and special education teachers for these voluntary pilots.



LONG BEACH:
Distance learning issues

Long Beach City College Faculty Association, which represents full-time LBCC faculty, finalized its distance learning agreement with Long Beach Community College District, securing a number of victories: a \$500 stipend for faculty members who return in the winter 2020 intersession to complete a suspended class, faculty-favorable amendments to large class stipends, an additional 10 percent release time for the association president during the current academic year, and a reasonable approach to faculty evaluations during the pandemic.

Long Beach City College Certificated Hourly Instructors continues to negotiate a distance learning agreement. They want fair compensation for required distance learning training, as well as a stipend to offset the added costs to part-time faculty delivering instruction from home.

FIREBAUGH: *Bargaining small cohorts*

Firebaugh-Las Deltas Teachers Association in Fresno County has been busy — actively bargaining small cohorts, waivers, and a return to in-person instruction. FLDTA engaged its members to determine how to proceed. For the small cohort special education work, 80 percent of their special education teachers were engaged at the bargaining table to decide how to safely return to school with identified students.

FLDTA was able to bargain an agreement that ensures safety for staff and a uniform approach to the small cohort implementation.

SACRAMENTO COE: *The power of unity*

Sacramento County Office of Education Teachers Association's unity powered the way to a successor contract that will mean a more than 7 percent pay increase over the next three years. Other highlights of the agreement: an additional \$720 a year in health benefits; an early retirement incentive; and stipends to recruit and retain speech-language pathologists.

TORRANCE: *Uniting for safe schools*

Torrance Teachers Association members have been working hard to protect one another and their school communities, successfully negotiating five agreements with the school district to ensure the safe return to classrooms. The agreements call for PPE and other accommodations for members who were required to return to campuses, as well as those who have returned voluntarily.

TTA also led an effective organizing campaign to ensure that returning nonteaching members have necessary intake meetings and are fully accommodated with whatever they need to be safe while interacting in person with students and staff. ■

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**RAZER KIYO STREAMING WEBCAM \$99**

Although it's the most expensive item on our list, this webcam kills two birds with one stone. Great video requires excellent optics but also requires excellent lighting. The Razer Kiyo Streaming Webcam includes a built-in ring light for flattering studio-like lighting and full HD capability.

razer.com/razer-kiyo

NEEWER 6X9 FEET GREEN SCREEN \$17

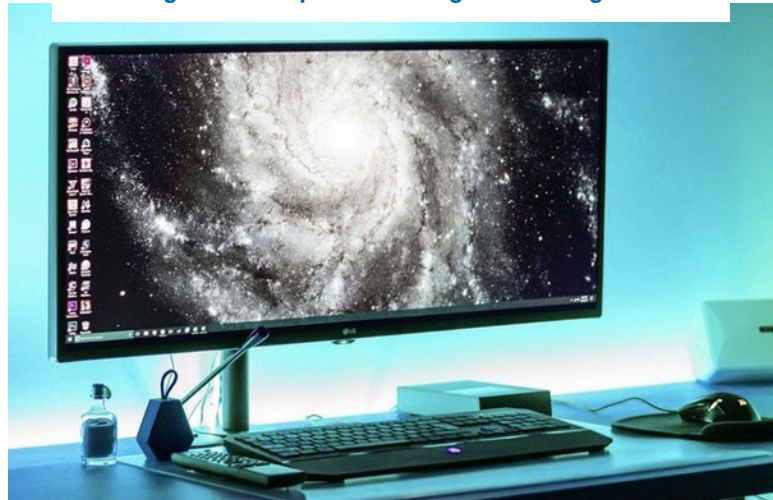
A green screen creates a multitude of opportunities to record and stream with different backgrounds, adding opportunities for creativity every day.

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The Gear You Need

Level-up your virtual classroom with these tech tools

By Terry Ng

ACHIEVING THE PERFECT online teaching setup can be hit or miss, as you've no doubt discovered this year. We recommend a few tools to help you improve your stream quality and expand your creativity — without breaking the bank. Level-up your Zoom or any live remote teaching setup so you can be fully in charge of your classroom environment.

OCCFFY BLUE LIGHT FILTER COMPUTER GLASSES \$20

Mitigating eye strain associated with hours of screen time can lead to better sleep at night and help with dry eyes and headaches. A 2017 study done by the University of Houston found that participants who wore the glasses showed about a 58 percent increase in their nighttime melatonin levels.

amazon.com/dp/B07RP6CG9G



Three days after schools closed in March, Green's high school students produced a nationally aired PSA on social distancing.



A Backstage Pass to Life

Doug Green's broadcast journalism students learn real-world lessons

LIKE ALL EDUCATORS dealing with a new way of teaching and learning, Doug Green has been forced to create work-arounds to accommodate pandemic-related constraints. For the broadcast journalism teacher, that means reinventing how his middle and high school students produce their broadcasts, source their stories, conduct their interviews, collaborate with each other, and so on.

In the days following the COVID-19 shutdown of schools in March, Green and his students nimbly adapted to the new world and continued to cover important stories in their communities with aplomb — all remotely.

“They highlighted students who were making extraordinary contributions during quarantine, students who remained in the essential workforce, community members rallying to provide food assistance. And they told lighter stories — how-to segments with cooking, crafting tips,” says Green, a member of Carlsbad Unified Teachers Association and a 2016 California Teacher of the Year.

“I have never been prouder of these young journalists and

how they worked tirelessly to keep our students and families connected to their schools, teachers, administrators.”

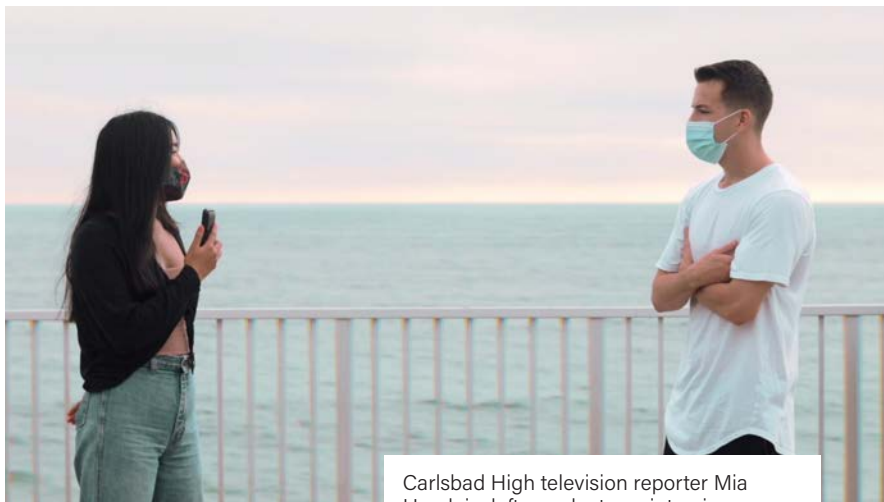
The kids are still at it. Green's day begins with a student-produced, professional-grade live broadcast at Carlsbad High School. Then he moves to Valley Middle School to teach and

help students produce a weekly broadcast. (Broadcast journalism is a grade 7-12 career pathway.) Both school broadcasts were named “Best in the Nation” last year — Carlsbad High's program for the 13th time, and Valley Middle's ninth such honor. In December his high school students won their third Pacemaker Award (called the Pulitzer Prize of student journalism).

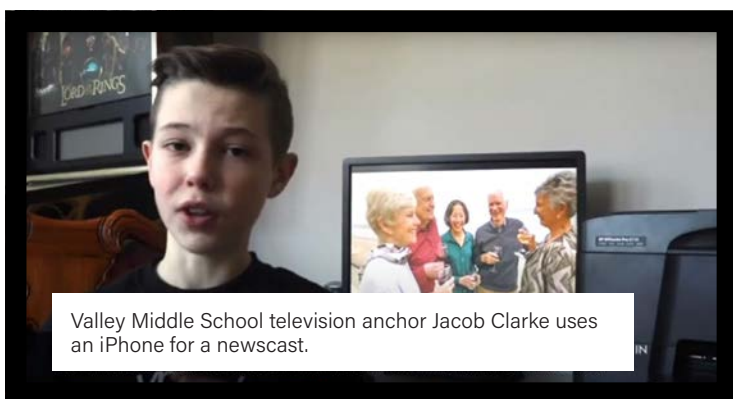
Green brought lessons learned last spring to this year's distance learning classes. Students are focused on “what's next?” topics such as the reopening of Legoland (a major employer of Carlsbad High students), resumption of school athletics, in-person student cohorts and after-school clubs, parent rallies for and against students returning to school, and more.

While the actual mechanics of his teachings may not be

“While nothing compares to the pre-COVID way, we are finding ways to produce meaningful, relevant broadcasts in spite of the challenges.”



Carlsbad High television reporter Mia Handojo, left, conducts an interview.



Valley Middle School television anchor Jacob Clarke uses an iPhone for a newscast.

applicable for many educators, the core learnings are. Here are some of them.

Develop principles behind the work

“We have three philosophies in my program,” Green says.

1. Journalism offers student journalists a backstage pass to life. For the broadcasting students, this is not a simulation. It is very real-world.
2. Everybody has a story.
3. We are the voice for the voiceless.

Be resourceful

“We’ve adapted. Students conduct conversations with story subjects using videoconferencing and improvise good lighting. They talk to and film people in person while observing social distancing and capture good sound with camera-mounted microphones or fixed

microphones on mic stands. They turn their home television screens into interactive touch screen monitors to enhance their stories. They record their voiceovers using cell phones. One student taped a microphone to a broom handle. Whatever it takes!”

Use existing tools

“We have two things working in our favor. Firstly, a powerful story can be told with a cellphone. Students learn right away how to take maximum advantage of their cell phones to shoot quality video and capture quality audio.

“During the school closures, we produced segments where we demonstrated for the general student body how to use *their* cellphones to achieve professional quality video (how to frame a shot, how to light a shot, achieve quality audio, how to find a compelling background). We did this out of necessity since we



Telling Fact From Fiction

FOR DOUG GREEN, helping young people become “highly news literate” is at the heart of what he and the broadcast journalism program do. He revels in the firsthand experience he offers his students.

For example, he points to three internationally distributed documentary films they’ve produced in the last 11 years. “Our most recent film, *Invisible Threat*, provided students with a powerful, real-world experience as they learned to analyze source material (websites, news articles) while questioning the various websites’ biases.” They examined “anti-vaccine websites that were funded by alternative health product manufacturers, [and sites] that link the MMR vaccine to autism even though those claims run counter to the science and discoveries that autism can be identified in utero, far before a child receives their first vaccine.”

The film and its students ended up on the front page of the *Los Angeles Times*.

“Students have learned firsthand that they need to question sources and they need to report without bias — that with the privilege of reporting and storytelling comes a responsibility to communicate with their audience truthfully and accurately.”

were asking for viewer-submitted content for our broadcasts, and we did not want to sacrifice production value.

“Secondly, we model our storytelling after professionals like NBC’s Steve Hartman and KARE’s Boyd Huppert. We also learn from the work of ESPN’s *E:60* broadcast. Every Carlsbad student has a school-issued Chromebook, and we have been experimenting with the online editing website WeVideo. Editing with a Chromebook is not ideal, but it is doable; iMovie is a free editing app for iOS phones.”



Doug Green

Use tools that are simple and widely available

“We depend on Google Classroom for much of [what we do] — polling for story ideas using Google Forms; brainstorming ideas using Google Docs; signing up students to report, anchor, shoot, edit and produce using Google Sheets; Google Drive for uploading, downloading and sharing large video files.

“We use Zoom for producer meetings and FaceTime for quick check-ins. Much student-to-student communication is done

spite of those challenges.” ■

Watch Valley Middle School and Carlsbad High School’s broadcasts at vmstv.com and chstv.com, respectively. Doug Green is entering his 30th year as an educator. In addition to teaching, he is involved in scholastic broadcast journalism at a national leadership level.

through social media channels — that seems to be the technology of choice for the kids. [We use Google Hangouts] to collaborate and conduct interviews.”

Practice safety

“We take special care of video equipment (cameras, microphones, tripods) and sanitize those items between student use.

“The challenges are more technical than anything else, and while *nothing* compares to the pre-COVID way, we are finding ways to produce meaningful, relevant broadcasts in

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You, Yourself and Self-Care

Taking time for your own needs



NOWAY around it — COVID-19 has turned the world upside down, and with it our normal lives. Between taking care of students' academic and social-emotional needs and families' and friends' health and well-being,

there's often no time to address our own stress and mental and physical needs.

But much like you would put an oxygen mask on yourself before putting one on a child, you need to be in good shape so you can help those around you.

According to a WestEd brief on self-care strategies for educators, "In order to support others, educators must support themselves first. In fact, ... self-care is considered an ethical imperative."

So, how should you tackle self-care? California's surgeon general offers a "playbook" on stress relief during COVID-19, which suggests six self-care areas to address to manage stress:

- Safe, stable and nurturing relationships, which can protect our brains and bodies from the harmful effects of stress and adversity.
- Healthy nutrition.
- Regular exercise.
- Restful sleep.
- Practicing mindfulness.
- Mental health care, which can help decrease stress hormones and improve health.

The playbook contains helpful checklists to set goals and focus on these categories. The **"Self-care planning"** checklist, for example, contains such items as:

I've set a goal of...

- Building my stress-busting routine.
- Limiting screen/news time to less than ___ hours per day.
- Making a plan for what to do when I'm feeling stressed out, angry, or overwhelmed.



- Planning with my partner, friends, or family to get support when I need it.
- Identifying my strengths and learning more about building resilience.

The **"Supportive relationships"** checklist includes:

I've set a goal of...

- Spending more high-quality time with loved ones.
- Having regular meals together with my household or virtually with those outside my household.
- Having regular "no electronics" time for us to talk and connect with each other.
- Making time to call or video-chat friends and family to maintain a healthy support system for myself.
- Connecting regularly with members of my community to build social connections.

The WestEd brief recommends ways educators can incorporate effective self-care into their lives by establishing healthy mindsets and behaviors. Here are a few excerpts.

Be optimistic and solution-focused

- Take a solution-focused approach. You might do so through conversations or by individually considering alternative solutions, challenging previously held beliefs, considering perspectives outside the self or immediate group, or reframing issues.
- Shift from pessimism to optimism. Focus on what you like and want, rather than on all the things you don't like or want.
- Practice reframing (see table on page 52). When faced with challenging new situations, distinguish the positive aspects from the negative.
- Look for opportunities in the challenges. Search for meaning and lessons within the challenges and uncertainties.
- Show gratitude. Practicing gratitude can begin to



Practice Reframing...

...from negative to positive

- shift your perspective from pessimism to optimism.
- Demonstrate compassion.
- Have compassion for yourself as well. Be kind to yourself. Try not to judge and shame yourself.

Foster openness, flexibility, adaptability and humor

Mindsets that are critical for remaining calm, thinking clearly, and making conscious choices can be developed and improved in various ways:

- Take physical and mental breaks. These include breaks from screens of all kinds — computers, phones, televisions, etc. Breaks can also include moving from one room to another or shifting your position in a room or moving from indoors to outdoors.
- Find opportunities for humor and laughter.
- Engage in mind-body activities.

Healthy boundaries and interactions

Establishing clear and healthy boundaries can support health and wellness for all. Some people need more connection and interaction, while others need more quiet time and solitude. Understand what you need and clearly communicate that to others.

- Attend to physical and social boundaries. Find a place where you can be alone at least once per day. Communicate when you need space. Communicate when you need more connection.
- Set boundaries for work. Create communication norms and expectations — for yourself, colleagues, students and families. Create clear and consistent messaging to students and families. Be clear about when you are and are not available.

Paying attention to your physical and psychological health and wellness and taking an active role to improve them are the best ways to continue to educate and support those who depend on you.

Resources

- "California Surgeon General's Playbook: Stress Relief During COVID-19": [covid19.ca.gov/manage-stress-for-health](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Playbook-Stress-Relief-During-COVID-19.aspx)
- "Self-Care Strategies for Educators During the Coronavirus Crisis": [wested.org/resources/self-care-strategies-for-educators-covid-19](https://www.wested.org/resources/self-care-strategies-for-educators-covid-19)
- Well-regarded meditation and sleep app Headspace now offers free access for K-12 educators: [headspace.com/educators](https://www.headspace.com/educators) ■

Negative	Positive
<p>Social distancing (we're forced to stay away from people and our favorite places)</p>	<p>Physical distancing (we're keeping ourselves and others healthy and safe)</p>
<p>Isolation and loneliness (I'm feeling alone and disconnected from people, and feeling like I don't belong anywhere)</p>	<p>Solidarity and solitude (we're unifying around a cause, and creating opportunities for alone, quiet time to think, relax, and recover)</p>
<p>Remote work + homeschooling children (there are too many people crowded in the house with too much to do all at the same time)</p>	<p>Connected and involved (although life is still busy, I am connecting more now with my family, friends, etc., and I'm able to be more involved in my child's education)</p>

When to Seek Help

IT'S NORMAL TO feel some anxiety during these times, and friends, family and colleagues can be great sources of support. Those who are experiencing intense and prolonged feelings of depression and anxiety — especially if it affects daily functioning — should seek professional help.

For immediate help:

- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-TALK (8255)
- To reach a crisis text line, text HOME to 741-741
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) disaster distress line: 800-985-5990

In Educators We Trust

CTA State Council talks safe schools amid public support

By **Julian Peoples**

MUCH OF OCTOBER'S CTA State Council meeting was focused on the November election and the need for candidates and legislation that would best serve our schools and communities. You can see our election coverage on page 43.

Delegates and CTA leadership also discussed reopening schools during the pandemic. President E. Toby Boyd thanked educators for their extraordinary efforts during this time, reaffirming that CTA continues to be a voice for health, safety and sanity in discussions about COVID-19 testing, contact tracing, and other precautions needed to physically return to classrooms statewide. CTA continues to build upon resources available for local leaders and members, and advocate at all levels to protect educators, students and communities.

Since the pandemic closed schools in March, CTA has acted swiftly to protect lives, and recent polling shows parents not only agree with these robust health and safety standards in our schools, they trust educators to guide decisions on how and when to physically reopen schools.

“The only source more trusted than teachers to guide decisions on reopening is Dr. Anthony Fauci,” said Boyd. “Most parents say they would not feel comfortable sending their kids to school right now. They say this despite the hardship some express regarding having their kids at home.”

In the poll, Hart Research Associates interviewed 1,296 registered voters in California, including 527 public school parents, about their views on whether, when, and how the state’s public schools should be reopened for in-school instruction. Among the findings: Eight out of 10 respondents say the spread of COVID-19 is still a serious problem in the state and believe schools should only be allowed to reopen if they have made major changes to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, including daily sanitizing, proper ventilation systems, reduced class sizes, testing programs, and required face masks.

“The only source more trusted than teachers to guide decisions on reopening is Dr. Anthony Fauci.”

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**



CTA President E. Toby Boyd at October's virtual State Council, socially distanced from CTA Secretary-Treasurer Leslie Littman.

This is in line with CTA's stance all during this pandemic, stated in multiple letters to Gov. Gavin Newsom and other elected leaders.

Approval: Ethnic studies curriculum policy

While the most recent effort to make ethnic studies a permanent part of the California high school experience ended in a Newsom veto, CTA educators are stepping up the fight to ensure that all students have the chance to see themselves and their ancestral legacies as part of a well-developed curriculum. State Council approved an expanded ethnic studies policy that outlines guiding principles for the foundation for any adopted ethnic studies curriculum. This policy will give CTA legislative advocates guidance as they continue the effort for ethnic studies legislation with elected leaders.

“We have an opportunity, I believe a responsibility, to stand up together and also say: An injury to one of our students is an injury to all of us,” Boyd said. “We must show our Black and Indigenous students and students of color that we see them, we see the systemic roadblocks in their path, and we will help them navigate this road until we can build a new one paved with opportunity for all.”

Remembering those lost

State Council commemorated Breast Cancer Awareness Month with a touching presentation and reminder to stay vigilant against the illness. Boyd also asked the assembled CTA leaders to remember all those who have been affected by COVID-19.

“I know some of you have lost colleagues, friends or family to this awful virus. Many of our students have faced similar losses in their families,” he said. “Our heart goes out to everyone who’s experienced loss over the past seven months.”

State Council will next meet (virtually) in January 2021. ■

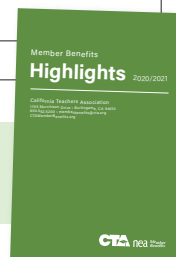
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Member Benefits Leader Tools	CTAMemberBenefits.org/leaders

Download the 2020-21 Member Benefits Highlights for a complete look at the programs. CTAMemberBenefits.org/download



Above and Beyond

The 2021 California Teachers of the Year

CTA CELEBRATES the five extraordinary educators named as 2021 California Teachers of the Year, who are all CTA members. The teachers were selected by state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond after an extensive process that began at the county level.

"On behalf of CTA, congratulations to these outstanding educators, who have gone above and beyond during a difficult time in our nation's history to adapt to its challenges and still meet the needs of students across our state," says CTA President E. Toby Boyd.

Thurmond similarly praises this year's winning educators. "In a year that might be the most challenging in all of our lives, these five inspiring teachers have made profound differences in the lives of their students and communities. I'm proud that these educators are receiving this prestigious honor for their continued effort to rise above the challenges and connect with students even during unimaginable circumstances."



Jim Klipfel



Allison Cyr



Keisa Brown



Laura E. Gómez Contreras



Nora Wynne

"Congratulations to these outstanding educators, who have gone above and beyond during a difficult time to meet the needs of students across our state."

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**

The 2021 California Teachers of the Year are:

- **JIM KLIPFEL** (Hart District Teachers Association), grades 9-12 social studies and athletics teacher at Saugus High School in Los Angeles County. Thurmond also nominated Klipfel as California's representative for the National Teacher of the Year competition. Klipfel will compete against other state nominees; the 2021 winning educator will be announced in the spring.
- **ALLISON CYR** (Desert Sands Teachers Association), multiple-subject third grade teacher at Lyndon B. Johnson Elementary School in Riverside County.
- **KEISA BROWN** (Riverside City Teachers Association), grades 7-8 Spanish and AVID 8 teacher at University Heights Middle School in Riverside County.
- **LAURA E. GÓMEZ CONTRERAS** (Santa Ana Educators' Association), multiple-subject third grade teacher at Martin Elementary School in Orange County.
- **NORA WYNNE** (McKinleyville Teachers Association), grades 6-8 Spanish teacher at McKinleyville Middle School in Humboldt County.

Presented by California Casualty and supported by the California Teachers of the Year Foundation, the California Teachers of the Year Program began in 1972 to honor outstanding teachers and encourage new teachers to enter the profession.

County offices of education nominate applicants through their county-level competitions. The California Department of Education (CDE) selection committees review applications; evaluate teachers' rapport with students, classroom environments, presentation skills, and teaching techniques; and interview the teachers. The state superintendent selects the Teachers of the Year.

For more information on the program, visit the CDE's webpage at cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct. ■

How to Build a Secure Financial Future

CTA's high-quality, low-cost Retirement Savings Plan is built specifically for you



Photo: Fabian Blank / Unsplash

LIKE MOST EDUCATORS, you're super busy juggling school and teaching with life on the home front. You barely have time to think about dinner, much less what's coming up 10, 20, 30 years from now.

So when you start getting emails or calls from financial firms mentioning they have the perfect plan for your retirement savings, you think sure, one less thing to worry about — sign me up now.

But hold on! Many plans offered by outside vendors end up charging high fees and commissions over time that can add up to thousands of dollars of your hard-earned money. And about 70 percent of these plans include surrender fees that lock up your savings.

To help you build a secure financial future and avoid such predatory tactics, CTA has developed a custom 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan (RSP) for members. The plan has low fees, and there are no commissions or surrender charges.

CTA oversees the plan, built specifically for educators, and partners with service providers that have been vetted for quality and service. As with all 403(b) plans, CTA's RSP is available through your district as your contributions are deducted from your paycheck.

"You spend your career helping students plan for their future," says CTA President E. Toby Boyd. "CTA wants to help you plan for yours. We think every California teacher has the right to a high-quality, low-cost retirement plan."

Employees of nonprofits like schools can participate in 403(b) plans to save money for retirement. Most educators don't qualify for Social Security benefits, and CalSTRS and CalPERS pensions potentially only cover a part of what is

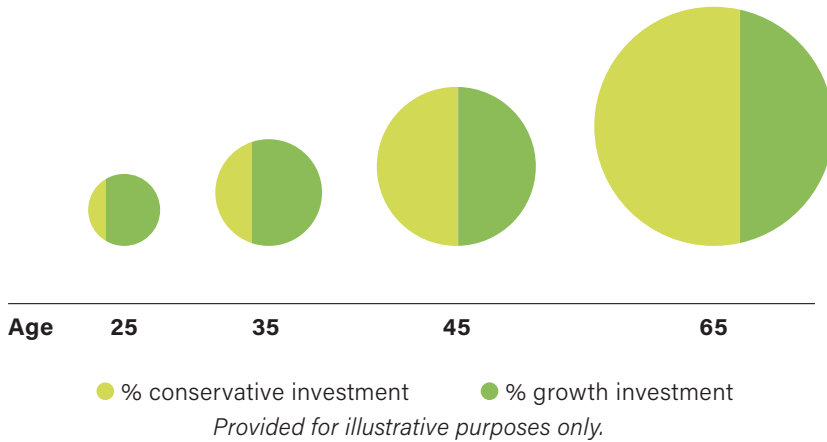
needed during retirement, so saving in a 403(b) is important.

Currently, over a thousand educators participate in CTA's RSP. Some moved funds from a former 403(b) to the RSP to save on fees, and others started in the plan as new savers.

CTA's Retirement Savings Plan includes:

- **High-quality investments monitored by RVK**, one of the largest independent and employee-owned investment consulting firms in the country. Many investments offered are institutionally priced (reserved for large investors versus an individual retail price). RVK reviews each fund's performance, fees and stability. RVK also has a "no conflicts of interest" business model where their only revenue comes from their clients (CTA in this case).
- **No commissions or commissioned salespeople.** All plan representatives and enrollment support professionals offered through Prudent Investor Advisors are salaried.
- **Responsibility.** CTA follows fiduciary standards that ensure all recommendations and decisions are made solely in your best interest. CTA, RVK and Prudent act as fiduciaries, meaning you may not need to spend money on a financial adviser to help manage your retirement plan.
- **Low transparent fees.** There are no hidden fees, and the plan is designed to keep administrative and investment management costs low.
- **CTA endorsement.** The plan is the only one that is built for and endorsed by CTA.

How a Target Date Fund Works



“You spend your career helping students plan for their future. CTA wants to help you plan for yours. We think every California teacher has the right to a high-quality, low-cost retirement plan.”

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**

There are two ways to select and manage your investments:

1. Through a **target date fund**, which corresponds to your age and planned retirement date, and automatically adjusts downward the level of risk being taken on that timeline over time. BlackRock, the world’s largest money manager, is the target date fund provider.

The target date fund is a mix of investments that is selected by professionals. As your planned retirement date gets nearer, the fund’s mix of investments automatically adjusts. It favors growth (more stocks) in the early years, and becomes more conservative (more bonds and income funds) as you near retirement. Using a BlackRock target date fund means you don’t have to worry about diversifying and rebalancing your portfolio; it’s all done for you.

2. **You select and manage investments yourself** based on a handful of options (generally invested through low-cost index funds) across the equity and fixed income spectrum.

There’s no minimum amount required to start the plan. And you can opt into or out of any fund as you please.

CTA wants you to have a long and happy retirement and is here to help on your journey to financial security. Contact the CTA Enrollment Center at 916-235-9800 or at enroll.ctaretirementplan.org for more information and to get started with the Retirement Savings Plan. In addition, you can watch a video about the plan with CTA President E. Toby Boyd at ctainvest.org/the-buzz, and find details as well as personal finance tools and investment news at CTAinvest.org.

For member stories about why and how they made the switch to CTA’s Retirement Savings Plan, turn to the following pages.



CalSTRS and CalPERS + 403(b) Savings = Income for when you stop working

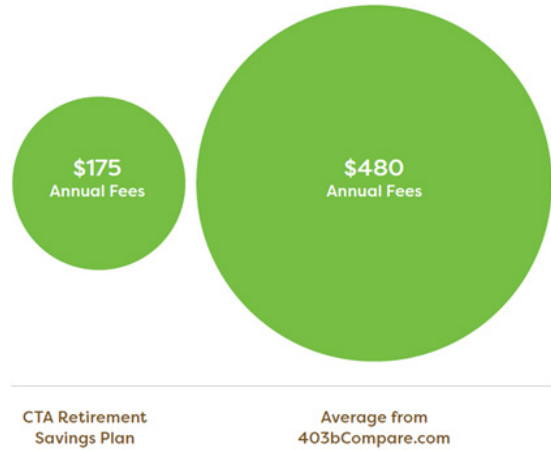


Because your CalSTRS or CalPERS pension will cover only about a third to a half of the income you will need in retirement, CTA has created a retirement savings plan to help make up the difference.

Pay Attention to Fees

“I appreciated the clear and easy presentation. It seemed like a better deal, so I switched.”

—**Kellyn Griffin**, Porterville Educators Association



A 30-year-old educator with an account balance of \$50,000 would pay \$175 annually in fees to invest in the 2050 target date fund offered by CTA. This is 64% lower than the \$480 average annual fee to invest in a 2050 TDF listed on [403bCompare.com](https://www.403bcompare.com). Fee references include management and administrative/custodial fees as of January 2019, and are subject to change.

Member Stories

CTA MEMBERS WHO have made the switch to CTA’s Retirement Savings Plan say they like what it offers them — especially lower fees and transparency. A few examples:



1. **Kellyn Griffin**, a member of Porterville Educators Association, is now in her ninth year of teaching. Soon after starting her first teaching job in Madera, co-workers told her, “You need to sign up for a 403(b), and you need to do it soon.”

The high school earth and space science teacher knows she’s lucky she got the advice. “I’m a science person — it’s not in my brain to know about 403(b)s,” she laughs. “I would have to do a lot of

my own research, so I rely on other people.”

Griffin has managed to save a substantial amount in the past years. But she was invested in a variable annuity product and realized she would be charged steep fees for withdrawing down the line.

Last year she attended a districtwide presentation on

CTA’s RSP. “I appreciated the clear and easy presentation. It seemed like a better deal, so I switched.”

Fortunately, she had been with the other plan long enough that there was no surrender fee to roll over her funds to the CTA RSP. She’s now invested in a target date fund that aligns with her year of birth. It’s estimated that she’ll save 68 percent annually in ongoing administrative and investment fees compared to her former funding option, using the CTA RSP’s largely flat administrative and custodial fees.

2. **Larry Johnson**, now in his 37th year as an educator, has enjoyed teaching subjects as varied as math, technology and alternative PE, but is looking forward to retirement in spring 2021. The Visalia Unified Teachers Association member has served on CTA State Council’s retirement committee for the past six years, where he got an early peek at CTA’s RSP.

“I’ve been hearing about the RSP program being set up to bridge the gap between high-fee annuities and the



The information contained in these case studies is based on information provided by the participant and the 403bCompare website, and in many cases directly from vendor websites. CTA, CTA VRPE, LLC, and Prudent Investor Advisors (Prudent), collectively the CTA Parties, are not responsible for the accuracy of information provided from these third-party sources. The CTA Parties believe these sources are reliable; however, no warrant or guarantee is provided related to the timeliness or accuracy of this information. The information contained in these case studies is offered for information

and education purposes only. It is not a recommendation to buy or sell any securities of any kind. These case studies are not intended to be tax or legal advice of any kind. The educator should consult a tax adviser for tax help or a competent legal adviser for legal advice. The CTA Parties and their representatives do not provide tax or legal advice of any kind.

Surrender fees and back-end loads/fees may apply to the early liquidation of some investment funding sources through a rollover



Larry Johnson

“You put \$100 a month away, do it for 20 years, that’s going to be a huge shift in what you have available to you. CTA products are set up to perform and not take things out at the end.”

—Larry Johnson,
Visalia Unified Teachers Association

CalSTRS pension,” he says. “CTA began rolling out retirement seminars at their conferences. I went to one last winter and found out that my 30-year-old variable annuity was one of the worst.”

Johnson says that when he first looked into 403(b)s years ago, there were no other options available. After he and his wife Sandy, a longtime kindergarten teacher, attended the seminar, they decided to “jump ship” and transfer to the CTA RSP this past summer.

He is now estimated to be saving almost \$3,000, or more than 90 percent, in ongoing administrative and investment fees annually compared to what he had before.

His son Ian is also an educator, teaching high school geology. Johnson urged him to start his 403(b) as soon as he began his career. “You put \$100 a month away, do it for 20 years, that’s going to be a huge shift in what you have available to you. CTA products are set up to perform and not take things out at the end.” ■

Get Your Plan Reviewed at No Cost

IF YOU ALREADY have a retirement plan, make sure you’re not being taken advantage of. CTA offers a free review and comparison of your current plan with CTA’s Retirement Savings Plan. To request a review, go to review.ctaretirementplan.org.

Opportunities to spend less on administrative and investment fees and save more for your retirement vary based on your individual circumstances, but they can be very meaningful. A recent fiduciary review of approximately 100 CTA members who are not in the CTA RSP indicates that they would save in excess of 50 percent on annual expenses.

Don’t know what type of plan you have? Call our enrollment team at 916-235-9800 for help.

Already Have a Plan? Ask This

MAKE SURE you’re in a retirement plan that does not charge you excessive fees and is transparent in how it operates. Start by getting answers to these important questions. To do this, call the company managing your plan. (Find their phone number on your statement or their website.)

- 1.** What type of plan do I have?
- 2.** How much are you charging me in total fees? Can you break down those fees for me?
- 3.** Where is my money being invested?
- 4.** Are there surrender or early withdrawal fees on my investments?

and/or exchange transaction and an individualized decision that takes into account all the variables that should be performed prior to taking action.

CTA RSP Program Costs are estimated using flat Annual Administrative Fees of \$95 plus 0.05% custodial account fees plus either the current 0.09% Net Investment Expense Ratio of the BlackRock Lifepath Target Date Fund options that each of these participants has used. The CTA RSP has a 0.13% Average

Net Investment Expense Ratio for the CTA RSP, as disclosed on 403bCompare.com.

Former Funding Account Costs are estimated using publicly available disclosures on 403bCompare.com and administrative, mortality and expense, and average investment management fees, as disclosed.



CTA

DIRECTORIAL DISTRICTS

YOU

can represent CTA at NEA's convention

ON THE NEXT PAGE is the official Declaration of Candidacy form for state delegates to the 2021 NEA convention in Denver, Colorado.

It is the responsibility of each member wishing to run for state delegate to fill out a Declaration of Candidacy form and file it by the deadline. You must use the Declaration of Candidacy form that is printed in the December 2020/January 2021 *California Educator* (photocopies are acceptable) or downloaded from the CTA website (cta.org/racandidacy).

The CTA Elections Committee will begin accepting state delegate Declaration of Candidacy forms on January 5, 2021.

Each candidate filing a declaration form will receive an acknowledgment of receipt.

Actual dates and other format details are still being finalized. You can expect the Representative Assembly to be the first week in July 2021.

In keeping with CTA's commitment to minority involvement, members who are people of color are urged to become candidates.

For more information, or if your chapter has not initiated an election by March 19, 2021, contact the CTA Elections Committee at 650-552-5300, or email RA@cta.org.

Note: The CTA Service Center Council directory can be found on the CTA website.

ABT (O)	3,585.20
AGUILAR (H)	3,969.52
BARTELL (M)	2,498.08
BILEK (G)	1,770.11
BONACCORSI (B)	1,960.96
BOYD	2,764.29
BRADFORD* (N)	0.00
BUSHÉE (I)	2,208.21
DAWSON* (N)	1,958.86
EATON (A)	2,420.77
ELLIS (At-Large)	1,687.22
FREEMAN* (At-Large)	2,068.94
GOLDBERG	1,609.29
GRANADO (L)	2,573.99
GUPTON (E)	1,540.64
HOUSE†	1,397.49
JONES (J)	1,390.56
LITTMAN	1,978.50
MARTINEZ (K)	2,852.04
NORMAND (C)	1,606.76
PATTERSON (D)	4,551.30
RODRIGUEZ (P)	1,955.66
RUIZ (F)	3,138.68
SHEAFFER* (Q)	1,438.47
TSE* (At-Large)	0.00

†CTA/NEA Coordinator

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Q (Higher Education) – Statewide
Two At-Large Directors – Statewide

CTA Board Expenses

Amounts represent a monthly average for fiscal year 2019-20. During the reporting year, the normal and statewide activities include CTA Board meetings, State Council, Service Center Council meetings, Equity and Human Rights Conference, Good Teaching Conferences, various task force meetings and other business-related functions. Some differences in expenditures may be due to the widely varied geographical sizes of directorial districts, distances traveled for Regional, Service Center and other meetings, and the varied number of functions CTA Directors are responsible for attending. Expenses of Board members with partial-year service are averaged based on months served and delineated with an asterisk.

DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY

For State Delegate to the 2021 NEA Convention
in Denver, Colorado

Deadline to submit declaration is January 29, 2021

Name _____ Cellphone _____

Address _____ Home phone _____

City, Zip _____ CTA/NEA Member ID Number _____

Personal email address _____ Gender M F Nonbinary

I am a member of: CTA NEA _____
Chapter

CTA Elections & Credentials Committee will begin accepting state delegate Declaration of Candidacy forms on Jan. 5, 2021.

Category:

- NEA Active (Non-Supervisory) Member** (including Education Support Professionals)
Send to CTA Elections, P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921, or email to ctaelections@cta.org.
- Higher Education CCA Member** (eligible to be in bargaining unit)
Send to CTA Elections, P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921, or email to ctaelections@cta.org.
- CTA/NEA-Retired Member** (must be member of CTA/NEA-Retired)
Send to CTA/NEA-Retired, Attn. Governance Support Dept., P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921,
or email to CTA-Retired@cta.org.
- Student CTA** Send to Student CTA Office, CTA, P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921.

Ethnic Grouping, Other Information:

I am: American Indian/Alaska Native Caucasian Hispanic
 African American Asian Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander

I am or plan to be a declared candidate for a local delegate position also.
 Yes No

If yes and you are elected to any delegate position (state, local, or both state and local), you are responsible for informing CTA (email to RA@cta.org) of your choice by April 9, 2021.

Name _____ Chapter _____

Please give a brief biographical sketch of no more than 30 words. (If more words are used, the information that accompanies ballots will include only the first 30 words.) If you wish your ethnicity to be listed, this will not count as part of the 30-word limitation. Please print.

Signed

THIS FORM MUST BE FILED NO LATER THAN 5 p.m. on Jan. 29, 2021, at the appropriate office listed above. Candidates are urged to return this form by certified mail in order to get a receipt and ensure compliance with the deadline. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that this document is received by the due date and time.

Duties of delegates to NEA RA in Denver, Colorado

1. Each delegate will be expected to arrive in Denver, Colorado, in time to ensure registering as an official delegate to the Representative Assembly (RA) with both the California delegation and NEA.
2. Each delegate will be expected to attend all caucuses of the California delegation. Normally, the caucus begins at 7 a.m. daily. Delegates must be registered with the California delegation to participate in the caucus. Delegates are expected to remain through the convention.
3. Each delegate shall attend all business meetings of the RA.
4. Each delegate is strongly encouraged to attend NEA budget committee hearings, resolutions committee hearings, bylaw committee hearings, speeches by prominent national figures, etc.
5. Each delegate should take into consideration CTA State Council and caucus policy when voting.
6. Each delegate is encouraged to participate fully in all activities of the California delegation.
7. Each delegate — state and local — will be expected to sit with his or her Service Center Council delegation on the RA floor or to inform the appropriate person where he or she will be seated. This is to ensure communication regarding RA business and/or personal emergency information of concern to the delegate, as well as to verify attendance.

I understand that, as a state delegate, my attendance is being directly funded, at least partially, by membership dues. I accept my responsibility to carry out the above specified duties.

Date

Signature

DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY

For CTA/NEA-Retired State Council Representatives and At-Large Director

Deadline to return declaration is January 29, 2021

CTA/NEA-RETIRED OFFICES TO BE FILLED:

<p>STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE</p> <p>Term: 3 years June 26, 2021–June 25, 2024</p> <p>Requirements: Must be a member of CTA/NEA-Retired AND must reside in the electoral district (see list at bottom right)</p>	<p>AT-LARGE DIRECTOR</p> <p>Term: 3 years June 26, 2021–June 25, 2024</p> <p>Requirements: Must be a member of CTA/NEA-Retired AND must be a person of color as defined in the CTA bylaws</p>
--	---

I AM A CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF: (Please select one)

<p><input type="checkbox"/> STATE COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVE:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> District 1 <input type="checkbox"/> District 3 <input type="checkbox"/> District 2 <input type="checkbox"/> District 4</p> <p>_____ County of Residence</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> AT-LARGE DIRECTOR:</p> <p>I am: <input type="checkbox"/> African American <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/ Alaska Native <input type="checkbox"/> Asian/Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic</p>
--	--

MY CONTACT INFORMATION: (Please print)

Name (as it should appear on the ballot) _____	CTA ID _____
Home Address _____	Mailing Address _____
City & ZIP _____	City & ZIP _____
Home Phone _____	Cell Phone _____
Email _____	

MY CAMPAIGN STATEMENT:

You may write a candidate statement **of no more than 30 words**, which will be included with the ballot. If more words are used, the statement will only include the first 30. Reference to ethnic identification will not be counted in the 30-word limitation.

Date _____ Signature _____

This form must be received no later than 5 p.m. on January 29, 2021.
Mail to CTA/NEA-Retired, P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921. Email: CTA-Retired@cta.org
Candidates may wish to return this form by certified mail in order to get a receipt and ensure compliance with the deadline.

CTA/NEA-Retired to elect State Council Representatives and At-Large Director

JAN. 29 is the deadline to submit declarations for CTA/NEA-Retired State Council Representatives and At-Large Director.

Anyone wishing to run for a position should complete this Declaration of Candidacy form and return it to the address at the bottom of the form.

Terms, which begin June 26, are three years for State Council Representatives and At-Large Director.

The ballot, including names of the candidates and their campaign statements, will be emailed to CTA/NEA-Retired members in February.

For more information, call 650-552-5439.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

Following are the counties in each electoral district for CTA/NEA-Retired:

District 1

Alameda	Napa
Contra Costa	San Benito
Del Norte	San Francisco
Humboldt	San Mateo
Lake	Santa Clara
Marin	Santa Cruz
Mendocino	Solano
Monterey	Sonoma

District 2

Alpine	Placer
Amador	Plumas
Butte	Sacramento
Calaveras	San Joaquin
Colusa	Shasta
El Dorado	Sierra
Fresno	Siskiyou
Glenn	Stanislaus
Kern	Sutter
Kings	Tehama
Lassen	Trinity
Madera	Tulare
Mariposa	Tuolumne
Merced	Yolo
Modoc	Yuba
Nevada	

District 3

Los Angeles	Santa Barbara
San Luis Obispo	Ventura

District 4

Imperial	Riverside
Inyo	San Bernardino
Mono	San Diego
Orange	

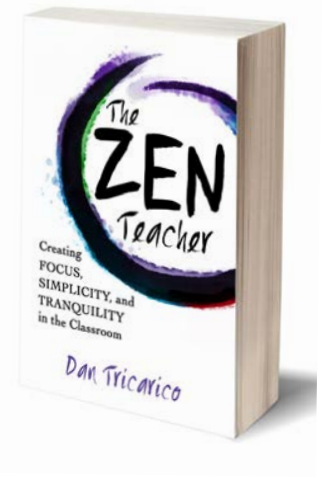


Continued from page 64

Avoiding Burnout, Gaining Peace

SIX YEARS AGO, Grossmont Education Association member and high school English teacher Dan Tricarico found himself headed toward burnout, even though he loved teaching and didn't want to quit. He started a blog to help him work through his stress, which soon turned into *The Zen Teacher: Creating Focus, Simplicity, and Tranquility in the Classroom*.

Though the book published in 2015, its message is perhaps more needed and urgent today. Tricarico, now in his 30th year of teaching, uses *The Zen Teacher* in workshops across the country to help educators reduce stress and improve their self-care. It shows how Zen-inspired techniques such as mindfulness, meditation, beginner's mind, compassion, gratitude, subtraction, decluttering, nonjudgment, and intentional, radical self-care can help teachers achieve a greater sense of relaxation, peace and control so they thrive both inside and outside the classroom. On Amazon.



Got something for these pages? Send details to editor@cta.org with "Lit From Within" in the subject line. We lean toward new(ish) work that can be used in the classroom.

Thank you

for remaining committed to our students.

Thank you

for being resilient through all the changes in our education system.

Thank you

for showing our students what courage is in unsettling times.

THANK YOU, TEACHERS.

California Lutheran University

Graduate School of Education

CalLutheran.edu/ThankYou

Lit From Within

Often educators' creativity spills over into a book, blog, app or other work. We're happy to showcase members' talents.



Life-Changing Dreams

As a 30-year English teacher, Paul Forster, Santa Barbara Teachers Association, has found his high school students have a fascination with dreams and with beliefs and philosophies of different religions. They also have "a fascination with the future," he says, "which is usually presented as dystopian." In his new young adult novel *Nightbook*, a high schooler and his diverse group of friends develop a new technology that creates lucid and life-changing dreams.

Written from various characters' viewpoints that challenge religious stereotypes, *Nightbook* is set in a tolerant future that is *not* bleak. On Amazon and Amazon Kindle.

Continued on page 63

Raquel Ramsey at the 2018 screening of *Never Surrender* at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library, which presented her with the sculpture she holds.



Family Stories of Courage

CTA/NEA-Retired member Raquel Ramsey has co-written *Taking Flight: The Nadine Ramsey Story*, about a courageous woman who helped clear the flight path for today's female combat and commercial aviators. In October 1944, Nadine Ramsey (the author's future sister-in-law) was 33 and flying the cutting-edge P-51 Mustang to the war in Europe. *Taking Flight* is the inspiring story of a girl from Depression-era Kansas who overcame tremendous challenges and defied convention to become an elite pilot — one of the few American women to fly fighter aircraft during World War II.

Raquel Ramsey taught for 24 years in Beverly Hills Unified School District. In 2016, she was co-executive producer of *Never Surrender: The Ed Ramsey Story*, a documentary about her late husband, who in 1942 led the final horse-mounted cavalry charge in U.S. Army history. After the fall of Bataan, Ed Ramsey became a member of the Filipino resistance, commanding over 40,000 Filipino guerrilla troops against Japan.

EDUCATORS

Create Your Professional Growth Path

CHOOSE FROM HUNDREDS OF CONVENIENT COURSES OFFERED
IN VARIOUS FORMATS TO ENHANCE YOUR TEACHING SKILLS

FEATURED COURSES

USD's Annual Spring/Summer Curriculum Design Courses are Back!

Strengthen Your Curriculum to Improve Learning with 6, 4 or 2-Unit Options

These courses are designed for educators in the K-12 classroom who would like to prepare new curriculum or revise existing curriculum that will result in motivated student learning. Participants will choose an instructor who they will work with throughout the course to create a coursework plan which will detail the curriculum they would like to design or revise. The coursework plan can include the introduction of new materials, design lessons, implementing new resources, converting curriculum to the online/remote modality, or implementing a new strategy that motivates student learning.

CHOOSE ONE COURSE:

EDU-X740P6 | Innovative Curriculum for Motivated Learning | 6 units
Enrollment open now through Jun 28

EDU-X740P4 | Innovative Curriculum for Motivated Learning | 4 units
Enrollment open now through Jul 12

EDU-X740P2 | Innovative Curriculum for Motivated Learning | 2 unit
Enrollment open now through Jul 20

Courses launch Mar 8, 2021 and completed course work must be submitted no later than Aug 23, 2021.

All courses are taught in flexible and convenient Online Self-Paced format *with set start and end dates, and available in various unit options (6, 4, or 2 units).

Prior district approval is highly recommended and the responsibility of the student if using course units towards salary advancement, credential renewing, and/or recertification. Not all courses may qualify in your local school district.

VARIOUS FORMATS

Independent Study:

These courses offer flexibility and the ability to complete a course faster or slower than a traditional live course. Our courses deliver the same high-quality content and expert instruction as traditional, "face-to-face" courses.

Online Self-Paced:

Offering you the perfect blend of accessibility, convenience and flexibility for you to control your learning pace. You will use course textbooks, manuals, assignments, digital tools, and exams to learn and earn credit.

Online Fixed-Date:

This format offers a convenient, yet rigorous style of learning that allows you to structure your education to suit your schedule. Online courses have fixed start and finish dates, but as an online student, you will have access to your digital classroom at any time.

Classroom:

These courses are offered in a traditional classroom where you can connect with your instructor and classmates in a live setting. This learning environment facilitates communication on a given subject in real time, enables immediate feedback, and fosters interaction with the instructor and like-minded classmates.



View our course offerings now!

Visit SanDiego.edu/EducatorsPrograms

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THOSE WHO
SUPPORT OUR
CHILDREN

That's why we're working with **California Teachers Association** to provide access to auto and home insurance designed exclusively for you and your fellow educators. It's our policy to do more for the people who give more. Starting with you.

Exclusive Member Benefits | Payment Skip Options | \$0 Deductible Waiver |



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with Auto
Quote!

And... for the opportunity to provide you a no-obligation quote, California Casualty will give you a **\$25 Amazon.com Gift Card** – when quoted before **January 31, 2021**.

Gift card offer not available in AL, AR, FL, GA, LA, NC, ND, MD, MS, SC, TN, TX, UT and WV.

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1.866.268.1754

WeProtectEducators.com/CTA



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AUTO AND HOME INSURANCE



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