

california
educator

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2021 VOLUME 25 ISSUE 4

**DOSE + F
HOPE**

**SCHOOL NURSE KEEPS HER
COMMUNITY SAFE**

PAGE 19

VACCINES

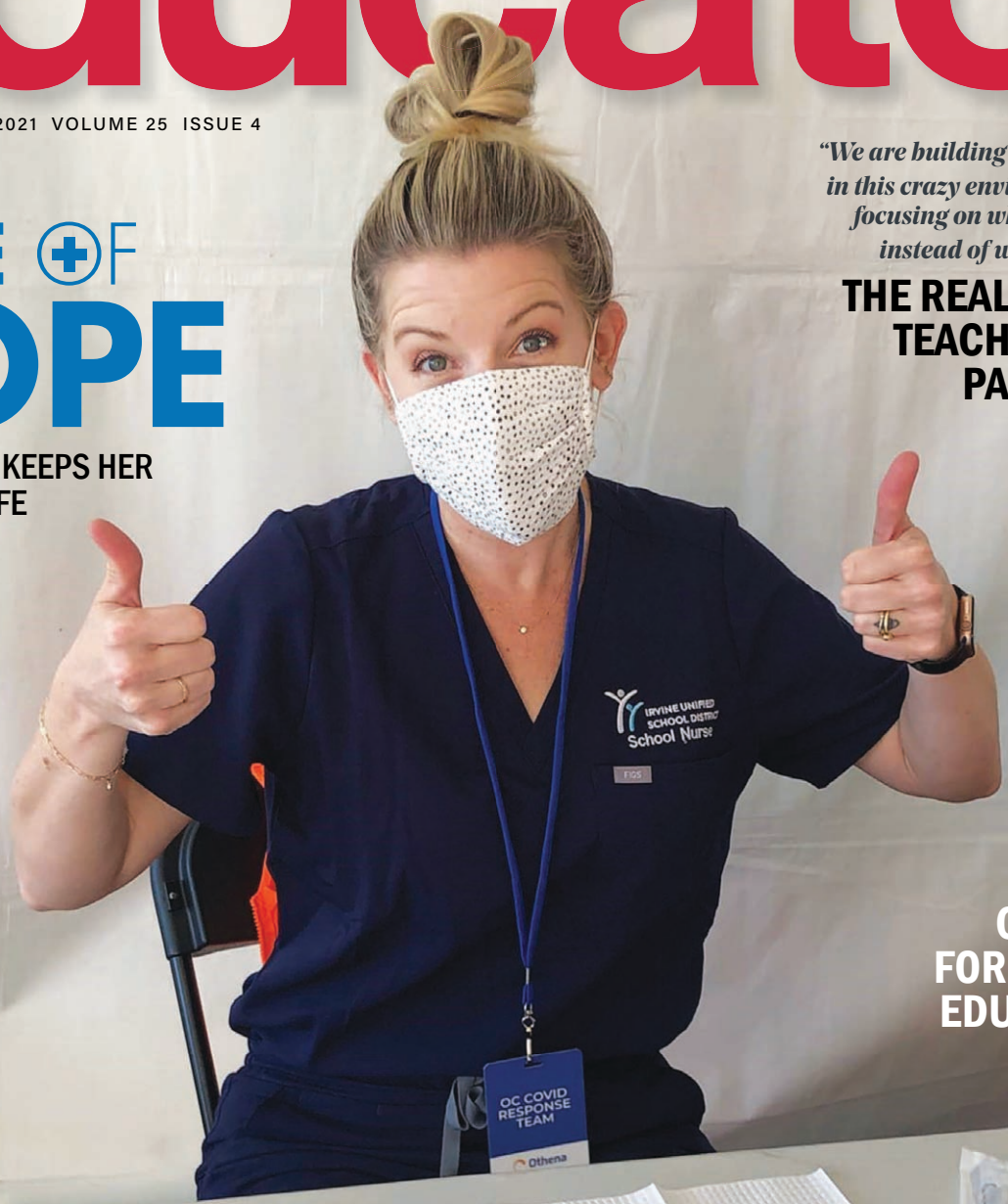
**JUST ONE
LAYER OF
PROTECTION**

PAGE 20

*"We are building relationships
in this crazy environment and
focusing on what we can do
instead of what we can't."*

**THE REALITIES OF
TEACHING IN A
PANDEMIC**

PAGE 26



**HARD
CHOICES
FOR WOMEN
EDUCATORS**

PAGE 32

**A New Dawn
PAGE 22**

**Read Across America
PAGE 10**

**Your Hidden Talents
PAGE 14**

**Home Science Kits
PAGE 48**

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VOLUME 25 ISSUE 4



#WeAreCTA

OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

MAGAZINE




SET YOUR GOALS NOW

How to address professional growth while you're in pandemic survival mode. **PAGE 53**

YES, TRY THIS AT HOME

No lab? No problem. Biotech teachers make science kits for their students. **PAGE 48**

EXCELLENT STEM EDUCATORS


California finalists for national presidential awards. **PAGE 58**
   paemst.org

TEACHING AN INSURRECTION

Educators help students process violent events threatening democracy at the U.S. Capitol. **PAGE 44**

DIGITAL

HIDDEN TALENTS, REVEALED





We asked, you answered — in GIFs! **PAGE 14** 

YOUR COVID-19 RESOURCES

Including the latest on vaccines, FAQs for educators and more. cta.org/COVID-19

TAKE ACTION TODAY

Tell leaders and lawmakers we must reopen schools #OnlyWhenItsSafe. **PAGE 12**


    cta.org/our-advocacy/action-center

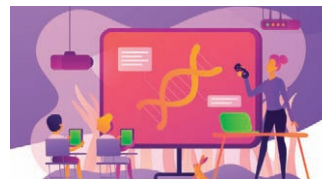
READ ACROSS AMERICA

Coming on March 2! Let's get ready to read. **PAGE 10**
readacrossamerica.org

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NEW GUIDE FOR YOU

CTA's "Distance & Hybrid Teaching Practices" is a practical, classroom-level review for all educators. **PAGE 30**
cta.org/ipd 



GET YOUR CREDIT!

Attend CTA's conferences this spring to get professional growth hours to qualify for university credit units. **PAGE 9**
cta.org/conferences

MEMBER BENEFITS

MONEY SMARTS

Use the tools at our Financial Wellness Center to get the most out of your money and achieve your financial goals. ctainvest.org

RETIREMENT SMARTS

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

STUDENT LOAN SMARTS

Got debt? Use the NEA Student Debt Navigator to find your best options. neamb.com/loanforgiveness

Photo: Saddleback Valley Educators Association's Kathy Adair in class; story on page 26.

▼ TALES FROM THE TRENCHES

What it's really like teaching right now

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▲ WOMEN EDUCATORS CAUGHT IN A BIND

Hard choices between work and family



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▲ DOSE OF HOPE

Vaccines are here — but they're only one layer of protection



A NEW DAWN

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Historic firsts mark new administration

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Photos: Clockwise from top left, Corey Morton with some of the tools she uses to teach in person and virtually at the same time; school nurse Shadlie Kensrue volunteering to give COVID-19 vaccines at the Disneyland supersite; Stacey Strong Ortega and her children working in their living room.



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](https://www.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)

INSPIRING STORIES

[In the December/January issue] I enjoyed E. Toby Boyd's President's Message, "Starting 2021 With a Heart Full of Hope," urging us to "make some time for your own renewal, and to replenish yourself spiritually, physically, emotionally."

Richard Cohen's article, "Listen With a Warm Heart," continues the theme of going inward to examine our thoughts and actions and to "lead forward," which requires "both an internal and external paradigm shift — from the judgmental to the compassionate, from punishing to healing." A message sorely needed in today's divided society.

The other article which caught my attention, "Putting History Into Context," was on history teacher Don Dumas [one of our 2020-21 Innovators]. What a brave soul, teaching facts about our history at a time when myths pass as facts, and telling the truth often gets the messenger in trouble, even ostracized. Kudos to Don Dumas!

Thank you for the inspiring articles.

MARTI GUERRA

Rancho Santiago CCD Continuing Education Faculty Assn.

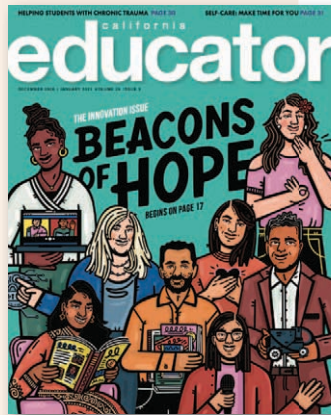
Thank you for the uplifting "Listen With a Warm Heart."

I appreciate this viewpoint during these very challenging days in our profession. I really hope that administrators can take this to heart and understand the teachers are doing their very best to teach students in a brand-new way. Whether in person with masks on, like at my school, or on a Zoom meeting, this is all new.

I appreciated Richard Cohen's view on being kind to one another! It's important to have patience and a heart 🍷.

STEPHANIE BOWEN

Mariposa County Teachers Association



Marshmallow Now or Later?

In a December/January story on helping students with chronic trauma, one segment cites the famous Stanford study in which children were offered one marshmallow now or two if they could wait a period of time. A follow-up to the study found that children who could delay gratification were more successful in life.

"Focus on the Future" caught my attention because I had heard about the Stanford marshmallow experiment in college. In fact, I often discussed it with my students. Then I attended a social-emotional learning conference a year ago that changed my thinking. The ability to postpone gratification has more to do with experiences the child has had. If they trust adults to keep their promises, they are more likely to feel assured that they rely on the environment.

SUZANNE NUTTALL

Simi Educators Association

Dr. Jill Biden

Thanks for the article on the recognition of Dr. Jill Biden as an incoming first lady who happens to be one of us, an educator/NEA member ["Educator in the White House," December/January]. However, in that same piece is the vexing problem of the almost emasculating attempt to deny women their well-deserved intellectual recognition. Long before she became first lady, she was a professor of education. As the foremost education union in the country/world, the least we could do is acknowledge those among us who have reached the pinnacle of our professional pursuit. Referring to her as "First Lady Jill Biden" is, in my view, disrespectful. The appropriate way to refer to her, especially in CTA/NEA publications, should/must be: The First Lady, Dr. Jill Biden.

FAITH O. MOWOE, PH.D.

Rialto Education Association

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

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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.

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California Educator Volume 25, Issue 4, February/March 2021 *California Educator* (ISSN 1091-6148) is published in August, October, December, February, April and June by: California Teachers Association, 1705 Murchison Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010-4583. Periodicals Postage Paid at Burlingame, CA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to *California Educator*, P.O. Box 4178, Burlingame, CA 94011-4178.



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² Single family/owner-occupied condos, homes and second homes in California only. The Movable[®] option is available on 5/5, 7/23 & 10/10 fixed adjustable mortgage loans. Other restrictions may apply. Membership required. Subject to final approval.



Light at the End of the Tunnel

2020 WAS A year unlike any other in the history of California public schools. The COVID-19 pandemic, the closure of public schools, and the sudden shift to distance learning brought challenges none of us could have foreseen. Through it all, CTA has been committed to helping you provide the best possible ongoing educational opportunities and resources to your students, and to ensuring that you can be and feel safe when returning to in-person instruction.

I know how eager you all are for this pandemic to wane so you can be with your students again. Fortunately, there is hope. The rollout of vaccines has begun, and educators are high on the priority list. The safety and efficacy data, the extremely low risk of harm, and the potential for the population to eventually reach herd immunity make the vaccines' arrival welcome news indeed.

But vaccines alone are not enough to keep us, our students and loved ones safe. CTA is working to ensure that school districts planning to reopen use a multilayered approach based on science and the recommendations of the experts. That includes masks and personal protective equipment; adequate ventilation; regular, rigorous cleaning and handwashing; social distancing in and out of class; and ongoing testing and tracking. It will take all of us using a variety of safety measures to safely emerge together.

In January, CTA called on Governor Newsom to enact a statewide plan to limit COVID-19 transmission over the next 100 days and slow the spread, along with a more rapid and effective vaccine rollout plan. We also need a public health communications campaign to help get all of our communities rowing together. And we must have a plan that provides continuity and improvement of learning now and in the long term.

I'm encouraged by President Biden's push to reopen schools as soon as it is safe, and his recognition of the many factors that must be in place for that to happen. We

“Vaccines alone are not enough to keep us safe. CTA is working to ensure that school districts planning to reopen use a multilayered approach based on science and the recommendations of the experts.”



Elizabeth Douglas Photography

now have an educator as U.S. secretary of education; that's a welcome change. I'm optimistic about the role the federal government will take in helping us reach our goals, not just in returning to schools and classrooms, but in addressing the many other systemic issues that have held back too many students since well before the pandemic ever started.

We are seeing light at the end of the tunnel. Again, it's critical that we work together. Ignoring safety protocols or discounting science will only prolong a pandemic that has gone on far too long and caused far too much suffering and loss. I can assure you that CTA will continue fighting to ensure every public school has the resources, equipment and information it needs to keep students, staff and the community safe.

In the meantime, I thank you again for the brave and dedicated way you've met multiple challenges and stood up for your students over the past months. Their futures remain bright because of you.

E. Toby Boyd

CTA PRESIDENT
@etobyboyd



That Silver Lining

I'M A LUCKY woman in this pandemic: My teens handle Zoom classes, homework and their meals largely on their own (cleanup is another matter). And I'm able to do my job remotely. Even so, with work, errands and obligations, and caring for an elderly relative who recently moved in, my days are tiring, and time to relax and regroup is scarce.

So I'm not surprised that in the past year hundreds of thousands more women than men have left the workforce, as females still shoulder most of the responsibility for family and child rearing, particularly with young children. (Sometimes, it's not a choice. Women are disproportionately employed in the service and health care industries, which have been hardest hit by layoffs.)

Female educators have been affected as well, as our story "**Women Educators Caught in a Bind**" (page 32) shows. In July, Erika Martinez, who has multiple sclerosis, resigned her teaching position rather than risk her and her family's safety when her school moved to resume in-person instruction.

"I want to be a role model for my daughter and show her a woman can succeed as much as a man," says Martinez, who at the time was president of Liberty Teachers Association. "But being a woman is hard. We have to juggle it all. And the pandemic is stretching us very, very thin."

Other women educators, concerned about safety and also lacking day care or facing impossible school schedules for themselves and their children, have taken unpaid leaves or cut back hours, despite financial hardships.

The silver lining? Unions, where female educators and women in general fare much better than their non-union counterparts. As noted by the Century Foundation in a recent report, unions "are helping workers survive the pandemic by negotiating safety standards, pay improvements, and contract provisions that help blunt the effects of layoffs, as well as serving as a powerful voice in local, state and national conversations about workplace issues."



Getty Images

Many women educators have been forced to choose between career and family.

For me, and millions of parents, *all* educators are the silver lining. Your boundless generosity and enthusiasm are exemplified by Shadlie Kensrue ("**Dose of Hope**," page 19). School nurse Kensrue is using her expertise in the COVID-19 crisis, volunteering evenings and weekends to administer vaccines — and hoping to soon get her needles into the arms of fellow educators.

The brave and nimble teachers in "**Tales From the Trenches**" (page 26) somehow manage simultaneous and asynchronous instruction and more. "I feel like I'm spinning plates in the air!" exclaims junior high math teacher Denise McLean. "People on the outside don't realize how much work it is," says high school science instructor Michael Lee. "I feel like an octopus," says fifth grade teacher Corey Morton, as she carries equipment around the classroom (iPad to show online students what in-person students are seeing; protective plastic partition when she needs to help kids up close; and so on).

It may be a "three-ring circus," as Morton says, but you are making it work. Your flexibility, your sense of humor, your unshakable drive to impart knowledge to our students give us all hope for a better tomorrow.

And that is what educators have always done.

Katharine Fong

EDITOR IN CHIEF

editor@cta.org

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

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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).

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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.



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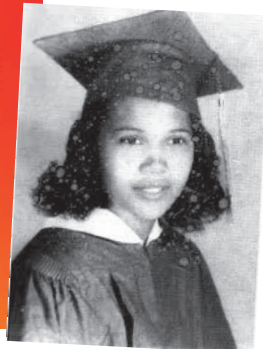
February / March 2021

CALENDAR

Black Lives Matter at School



NEA edjustice
www.neaedjustice.org



Black History Month Black Lives Matter

FEBRUARY 15 Black History Month. The 2021 theme is "The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity"; see weareteachers.com for classroom activities for February and beyond.

Educators can help students learn to challenge racism and oppression and gain the vocabulary and tools needed to take action using free curriculum available at Black Lives Matter at School (blacklivesmatteratschool.com). 2020-21 is the movement's "Year of Purpose." Educators, students and parents are encouraged to participate in ongoing actions and reflection throughout the year. For example, Student Activist Day on March 6 celebrates Barbara Johns (inset; in 1951 at age 16 she led a student strike that became one of five desegregation cases consolidated into *Brown v. Board of Education*) and all Black student activists.

Find more resources at cta.org/blacklivesmatter and NEA EdJustice (neaedjustice.org/black-lives-matter-school-resources). And sign NEA's pledge to grow the movement and support racial justice in education: neaedjustice.org/blm-at-school-pledge.

Music in Our Schools Month

GET READY to face the music in March. The National Association for Music Education (nafme.org) offers various grade-level lessons that help students learn elements of music through classic children's songs. All are free for teachers to use during March and year-round.



DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

FEB. 19 15 a day to remember the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II, set in motion by an executive order signed by President Roosevelt on Feb. 19, 1942. Now, a new U.S. postal stamp honors Japanese Americans who served and died for our country during WWII. "Go for Broke" was the motto of the all-Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team and came to represent all Japanese American units formed during WWII.

CTA Conferences: Get the Credit You Deserve

MEMBERS WHO ATTEND CTA's virtual conferences through May 2 (either live or by watching recordings) can accumulate the professional growth hours needed to qualify for university credit units (15 hours per one unit). Credit is free to members — as are the conferences — and is based on the number of sessions you attend. Go to cta.org/conferences for more and to register. February's offerings:

- ▶ **New Educator Weekend – 2021 Home Edition!** **FEB. 18–21** Everything educators need to be successful in their first years of teaching, including sessions on classroom management, special education, state standards, assessments, and more.
- ▶ **Equity and Human Rights Conference – 2021 Home Edition!** **FEB. 24–27** Affirms CTA's mission to protect the civil rights of children and secure a more equitable, democratic society. Speakers and workshops give a greater understanding of diversity, equity and social justice.



Member-in-Politics Award in Honor of Ted Bass

FEB. 26 **NOMINATION DEADLINE**

Given to outstanding educators for their contribution to the education profession through political action. Chapters may nominate one member from their chapter. ▶ cta.org/awards

Chapter-in-Politics Award in Honor of Joyce Fadem

FEB. 26 **NOMINATION DEADLINE**

Given to outstanding chapters for their contribution to the education profession through political action. Chapters may nominate themselves.

▶ cta.org/awards

NEA Foundation Grants

FEB. 28 **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

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

Read Across America

MARCH 2 **EVENT**

Celebrate by reading with your students! CTA's California Reads program offers teacher-recommended book selections year-round for students of all ages. See page 10 to get started with a few book suggestions.

▶ cta.org/californiareads

CTA/NEA-Retired Conference

MARCH 2–5 **CONFERENCE**

Virtual. "Retirement in the Digital Age." See page 12 for details.

▶ cta.org/conferences

Chavez/Huerta Awards

MARCH 5 **ENTRY DEADLINE**

Cesar E. Chavez and Dolores Huerta Education Awards honor students who can express Chavez's guiding principles. Awards up to \$550 go to both sponsoring CTA member and student.

▶ cta.org/scholarships

Good Teaching Conference

MARCH 11–14 **CONFERENCE**

Virtual. "Middle and Secondary Home Edition!" Supports excellent teaching practices with a special focus on grades 6-12. ▶ cta.org/conferences

NEA National Leadership Summit

MARCH 12–14 **CONFERENCE**

Virtual. Develops activist leaders and prepares them with knowledge and skills to lead thriving associations. Aligned with the NEA Higher Ed (March 11–12) and NEA-Retired (March 14–16) conferences.

▶ nea.org/leadershipsummit

NEA ESP Conference

MARCH 19–21 & 26 **CONFERENCE**

Virtual. The premier professional development opportunity for education support professionals across the nation enhances ESPs' skills and knowledge.

▶ nea.org/espconference

Spring CUE

MARCH 18–27 **CONFERENCE**

Virtual. This educational technology conference offers more than 400 sessions with keynotes from world-renowned educators. ▶ cue.org/spring

CTA Institute for Teaching Grants

MARCH 31 **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

IFT's Grant Program demonstrates what CTA members can do when they have the freedom to create and invent. Apply for Educator Grants up to \$5,000 and Impact Grants up to \$20,000.

▶ cta.org/ift

John Swett Awards

APRIL 3 **NOMINATION DEADLINE**

CTA's John Swett Awards for Media Excellence recognize media professionals for outstanding coverage of education during 2020. New category: student journalism. CTA local chapters and Service Center Councils may nominate. ▶ cta.org/awards

EMEID Leadership Program

APRIL 9 **APPLICATION DEADLINE**

Members of color interested in leadership roles in CTA may apply online to the Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development program starting Feb. 16. Applicants will be notified by May 14. ▶ cta.org/emeid

CCA Spring Conference

APRIL 23–25 **CONFERENCE**

Virtual. The Community College Association's conference highlights advocacy and features CCA's WHO (We Honor Ours) Awards.

▶ cta.org/conferences

Special Education Conference

APRIL 30–MAY 2 **CONFERENCE**

Virtual. Join CTA's first-ever Special Ed Conference! ▶ cta.org/conferences

It's Lit!

Read Across America Day, *March 2*

JOIN CTA AND NEA'S Read Across America (readacrossamerica.org) on March 2 and all year long to celebrate a nation of diverse readers with recommended books, authors and teaching resources that represent an array of experiences and cultures. CTA's California Reads is a roundup of recommended, teacher-vetted books for all grade levels, including the following (see cta.org/californiareads for the full list).



Black Brother, Black Brother by Jewell Parker Rhodes (grades 6-8) is a story of two brothers — Trey, who presents as white, and Donte, who presents as Black — and the ways they are forced to navigate the world. At their predominantly white school, an incident leads to Donte's arrest and suspension. He masters fencing to challenge the school bully to a competition, and learns much about himself in so doing. (See NEA's Read Across America February calendar at readacrossamerica.org for its African American booklist.)



The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family by Ibtihaj Muhammad with S.K. Ali, illustrated by Hatem Aly (grades 1-2). Faizah and older sister Asiya attend their first day of the new school year — and Asiya's first day of hijab, made of a beautiful blue fabric. But not everyone sees hijab as beautiful, and in the face of hurtful, confusing words, Faizah finds new ways to be strong and support her sister.



Shaking Things Up: 14 Young Women Who Changed the World by Susan Hood and 13 female illustrators (grades 3-5). Mary Anning was 13 when she unearthed a prehistoric fossil. Ruby Bridges was 6 when she helped end segregation in the South. Maya Lin won a competition to create a war memorial at 21. Other young women in this inspiring book of poems include Molly Williams, Annette Kellerman, Nellie Bly, Pura Belpré, Frida Kahlo, Jacqueline and Eileen Nearne, Frances Moore Lappé, Mae Jemison, Angela Zhang, and Malala Yousafzai.



The book is a good pick for **Women's History Month** in March and **International Women's Day** on March 8. Go to NEA's Read Across America March calendar (readacrossamerica.org) for other relevant titles. See NationalWomensHistoryAlliance.org and InternationalWomensDay.com for activities and resources.





Statue of Chavez and Huerta in Napa.

LABOR LESSONS: CESAR CHAVEZ AND DOLORES HUERTA

USE **CESAR CHAVEZ DAY**, March 31, and Dolores Huerta Day, April 10, to teach students about California labor and civil rights history and ongoing community activism. CTA educators, among others, recently helped the Dolores Huerta Foundation create curriculum and resources for K-12 students. Find it at DoloresHuerta.org.

Lesson plans and curriculum around Cesar Chavez are available at PBSlearningmedia.org and scholastic.com, and from the California Department of Education at chavez.cde.ca.gov.

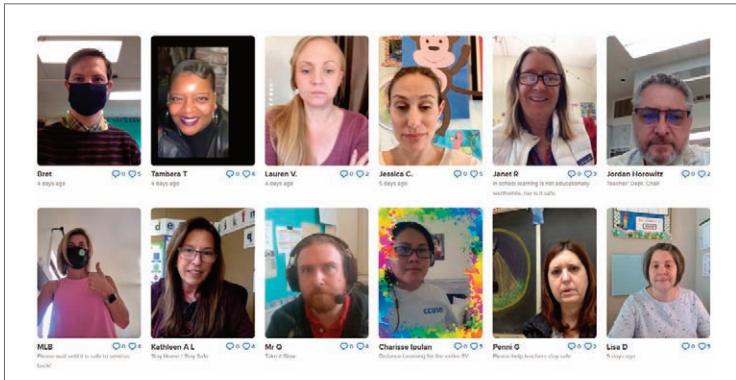
MARCH: ARTS EDUCATION MONTH

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT learning arts subjects alongside math, history, science and English helps boost student success. Students who have an arts education achieve more A grades (in all subjects), have better attendance, are more likely to graduate from high school, and have better critical thinking, collaboration and social-emotional skills than those who don't. Learn more and get ideas for your students at Create CA (createca.org).



CTA's Year in Review

AMID SOME OF the most difficult challenges educators have ever faced, CTA continues to lead the fight for the resources all students need, the schools they deserve, and the safe and healthy teaching and learning conditions our school communities require. Much of this is showcased in CTA's new Annual Report (cta.org/cta-year-in-review-2019-2020). From winning accountability and transparency for charter schools, to fighting for racial and social justice, to supporting and championing educators in myriad ways, CTA is unstoppable — thanks to you.



Make Your Voice Heard: #OnlyWhenItsSafe

LET CALIFORNIA lawmakers hear from you. Right now, they are debating, crafting legislation, and making decisions that will shape our remaining days in this pandemic. They need to know what is happening with you and your world to make informed decisions.

We invite you join fellow educators to record a short video at bit.ly/EducatorsOnSafety. Help lawmakers understand what teaching and learning during a pandemic has been like for you; the challenges you and your colleagues, students, family and community have faced in the past year; and your hopes and needs for the future.

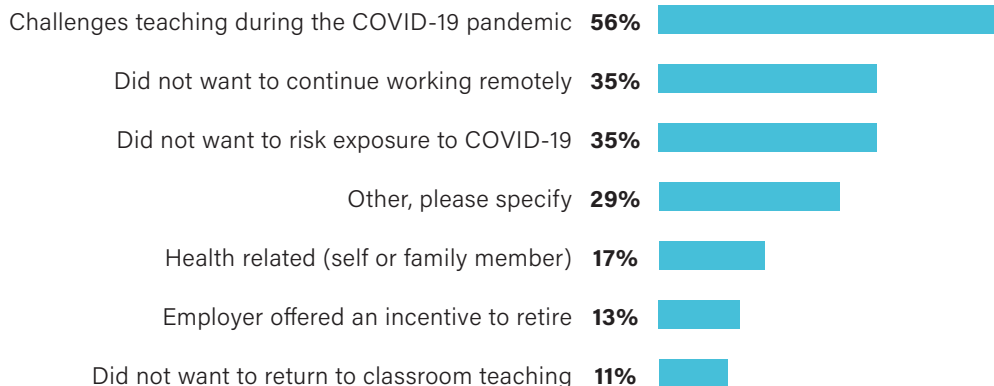
CTA/NEA-Retired Issues Conference

THIS YEAR'S conference — virtual and free, March 2-5 — addresses “Retirement in the Digital Age.” Get info and insights on Medicare and pensions as well as social media, activism and digital security. Network with other veteran educators and stay connected and involved with CTA/NEA. Speakers include CTA President E. Toby Boyd; Mary Kusler, senior director of NEA’s Center for Advocacy; NEA-Retired President Sara Borgman; and Jack Ehnes, CEO of CalSTRS. Register at cta.org/conferences.

EARLY RETIREMENT?

CalSTRS (State Teachers’ Retirement System), which provides retirement, disability and survivor benefits for full-time and part-time California public school educators, has reported a large number of teacher retirements — 5,644 — in the last six months of 2020, on track to be the highest total since 2009-10. In a survey of 517 recent retirees, 62 percent indicated they had retired earlier than planned. Their reasons:

What contributed to your decision to retire earlier than planned? Select all that apply:



Source: CalSTRS

Our members have heart

SCHOOL MAY NOT BE THE SAME THIS YEAR
BUT OUR DEDICATION TO **OUR MEMBERS** REMAINS

Adelanto Elementary School District • Alta Loma School District • Apple Valley Unified School District • Baker Valley Unified School District • Baldy View Regional Occupational Program • Barstow Community College District • Barstow Unified School District • Bassett Unified School District • Bear Valley Unified School District • Beaumont Unified School District • BestNet JPA • Brea-Olinda Unified School District • CAHELP JPA • Central School District • Centralia School District • Chaffey Community College District • CharterSAFE • Chino Valley Unified School District • College & Career Advantage • Colton Joint Unified School District • Colton-Redlands-Yucaipa Regional Occupational Program • Copper Mountain Community College District • Covina-Valley Unified School District • Cucamonga School District • East San Gabriel Valley Regional Occupational Program • East Whittier City School District • Encinitas Union School District • Etiwanda School District • Excelsior Charter School • Fontana Unified School District • Helendale School District • Hemet Unified School District • Hesperia Unified School District • Laguna Beach Unified School District • Lucerne Valley Unified School District • Morongo Unified School District • Mt. Baldy Joint School District • Mountain View School District • Needles Unified School District • North Orange County Regional Occupational Program • Ontario-Montclair School District • Oro Grande School District • Ramona Unified School District • Rialto Unified School District • Rim of the World Unified School District • Riverside Community College District • Riverside Unified School District • San Bernardino City Unified School District • San Bernardino Community College District • San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools • San Marino Unified School District • Santee School District • Savanna School District • Silver Valley Unified School District • South Pasadena Unified School District • Southern Kern Unified School District • Summit Leadership Academy • Victor Elementary School District • Victor Union High School District • Victor Valley Community College District • Westminster School District • Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District

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Hidden Talents

By @samdemuro

THE PANDEMIC HAS inspired many of us to learn new skills or sharpen hidden talents, so we asked members to answer in GIFs the question: "What is a hobby/interest you have that people are surprised to learn about you?" To see the hundreds of responses (and actual GIFs), go to our Facebook group **CTA Teaching, Learning and Life During COVID-19**.

▼ Debbie Apple



▼ Leslie Smith



▼ Melyssa Vaughan-Lamonea



▲ Roberto Rodriguez



▲ Ashley Marie Williams: I've had a baking business since I was 18. I make cupcakes, cookies, cakes, you name it. All types and flavors! I don't like limiting myself



▲ Amy Lynn



▲ Mary Anne Arabia



▲ Anne Lean



▲ Laura Duchesne Pruden

QUILTING: YOU CUT UP PERFECTLY GOOD FABRIC INTO TINY PIECES



AND THEN SEW IT BACK TOGETHER

▲ Miki Smith

VIDEO GAMES AND CHILL?



◀ **Mishana Alcala-Mosley:**
I am a serious gamer: video and board games. When my students eventually learn this, I suddenly become cool.



▲ Eric Bienke



▲ Kelly Villalobos



▲ Tristan Kratz



MY PRECIOUS! MY OWN!

▲ Keisha Clemens



▲ Amy R. Hunter



▲ Sharon Frazier-Verpooten



▲ Ryan Allaman: It's an online game called Overwatch.



▲ Luci Nunes

Quotes & Numbers

Compiled by Julian Peebles



41,811

COVID-19 deaths in California as of Feb. 3, with 3,281,271 cases, according to the California Department of Public Health.

\$85.8 BILLION

Gov. Gavin Newsom's **proposed Prop. 98 education funding** for 2021-22, the highest ever. (See page 38 for story.)

\$175 BILLION

Proposed funding for President Biden's plan to provide school districts nationwide with the resources they need to physically reopen safely — including \$130 billion for K-12 and \$35 billion for higher ed.

25

States, including California, where some educators are eligible for the coronavirus vaccine as of Feb. 1, according to *Education Week*.

88%

Percentage of students who said they trust their educators to teach in ways that will help them grow, in a recent NEA/PTA joint research study. The same percentage believe their generation has the power to change the country.



“President Biden and Vice President Harris are poised to govern with heart and truth, purpose and resolve. These values are the welcome change our country needs.”

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd** on Inauguration Day 2021.

“I want to thank Governor Gavin Newsom for proposing a budget that — until our educators, school employees and communities are vaccinated — addresses main areas of need as public schools consider how to safely resume in-person instruction.”

—**Tony Thurmond**, superintendent of public instruction, in response to the governor’s record education budget proposal.

“LET THIS BE A YEAR OF ILLUMINATION, OF SWITCHES FLIPPED IN LONG-EMPTY CLASSROOMS AND OFFICE BUILDINGS, OF CANDLES BURNING AT OVERCROWDED DINNER TABLES, OF FIREWORKS PAINTING THE SKY IN CELEBRATION. IN THIS DARK BEGINNING, WE REACH TOWARD THE LIGHT.”

—**Jill Biden**, first lady of the United States and NEA member, in her prayer for the new year.

“I am honored to serve alongside @teachcardona (Miguel Cardona, nominee for U.S. secretary of education) to restore our education system — putting teachers, students and parents first. Work Hard. Be Kind. Dream Big. Let’s do this!”

—**Cindy Marten**, San Diego Unified superintendent and nominee for U.S. deputy secretary of education.

Chaz Garcia (with dog Barkley), wearing a shirt made for her by a former third grade student.



Learning Leadership

Chaz Garcia is EMEID's biggest booster

CHAZ GARCIA had never heard of CTA's Ethnic Minority Early Identification and Development (EMEID) program when a leader at her chapter, Oakland Education Association, asked her to apply seven years ago.

In fact, even though she was a rising OEA leader herself, she had limited knowledge of CTA. But she was intrigued, so she applied and was accepted. Her year in the program, which helps members of color broaden their knowledge of CTA and explore possible roles in leadership, was life-changing.

"I'm very grateful I had the opportunity to go on this journey and connect with other educators," says Garcia, who became EMEID chair in early 2020 and serves as OEA's 2nd vice president and bargaining chair. "Our cohort learned a lot from each other and created lifelong bonds and a support system."

For ethnic minority members who had previously navigated their lives and careers in isolation, much of their support stemmed from discovering that they weren't alone. "I was going through my life and work as one of the only women of color, not being able to have people to relate to in my journey," recalls Garcia, now in her 26th year as an educator.

"I'm grateful I had the opportunity to go on the EMEID journey. Our cohort learned a lot from each other and created lifelong bonds and a support system."

EMEID also offered other valuable growth experiences, as it builds on existing CTA/NEA programs, trainings, conferences and events, and incorporates coaching and interaction with CTA leadership. "I appreciated my EMEID mentor, going to State Council, connecting with others in different levels of leadership," Garcia says.

Garcia has become a tireless advocate for racial equity, both within CTA and in the larger world. She is now a member of CTA's Racial Equity Steering Committee and the Racial and Social Justice Advisory Committee, both of which work toward an inclusive CTA that involves and empowers its members.

As EMEID chair, she leads the EMEID workgroup and has ambitious plans to expand the program's reach and touch more members of color. For example, she'd like to bring in past EMEID participants to serve as mentors to current participants and provide an additional layer of support.

"The ability of folks of color to grow and navigate through the education world is a little challenged if others [who mentor them] don't have the same experiences and journey," she says. "Past participants have hindsight and experience and can provide coaching."

She also wants to reach those turned away from EMEID because of capacity issues. "We could create some sort of structure or network that is beneficial for everyone, that gets everyone engaged and lets us support each other in, for instance, different campaigns on an organizing level."

Garcia's journey, boosted by the EMEID program, continues. ■

CTA's EMEID Program

FIND MORE INFORMATION and apply for EMEID 2021-22 online at cta.org/emeid; deadline is April 9. Applicants will be notified by May 14. Participants begin in June and finish 12 months later. They must commit to attending the Emerging Leaders strand at CTA's Summer Institute, July 25-29, and January State Council, Jan. 11-12, 2022.

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

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Shadlie Kensrue administers COVID-19 vaccine at the Disneyland supersite.

DOSE OF HOPE

School nurse Shadlie Kensrue helps keep her community safe while waiting for educators' turn

LAST YEAR, Shadlie Kensrue, full-time credentialed nurse for Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) and member of Irvine Teachers Association, was closely following the COVID-19 vaccination rollout plans in Orange County. Once the county started its first phase of vaccine distribution and injections in late December, she reached out to help, volunteering after work hours and on the weekend.

“I have had a lot of guilt that I am not shoulder to shoulder with my intensive care unit colleagues, especially during this last surge that has overwhelmed our hospitals,” says Kensrue, a critical care and trauma nurse prior to her current job at Northwood High School. “It has been an honor for me to volunteer my time and my skills to our community during this pandemic.”

Kensrue found herself administering shots at the Disneyland and Soka University

supersite locations and various clinics to frontline workers, the elderly, and those with underlying conditions. Meanwhile, she remains acutely aware of the need for educators to get vaccinated.

“With each vaccine I give, my hope is that perhaps that could be one less hospitalized or ICU patient. And with each dose given, my hope is that we are one dose closer to getting these vaccines into the arms of our teachers and school staff.”

Unfortunately, Orange County officials, like many of their counterparts in California, still have not determined when they’ll be able to start vaccinating educators and others in Phase 1B. In addition to a lack of state-

“It will be an awesome day when I get to give educators their vaccine and tell them thank you for hanging in there and taking on the impossible task of supporting students through this pandemic.”

—Shadlie Kensrue,
Irvine Teachers Association

wide coordination, many counties report vaccine



shortages and being behind in inoculating the thousands of people in Phase 1A.

(In a press conference on Jan. 25, Gov. Gavin Newsom announced that starting in February, teachers and others in Phase 1B of the state’s vaccination priority list could begin to be vaccinated, even in counties where Phase 1A is still being vaccinated.)

Educators and others awaiting vaccines are understandably frustrated, as is Kensrue. “Because IUSD has been in person since fall, our teachers are eager to receive this vaccine, and I am willing to do anything I can to speed up that process for them,” she says.

“Our teachers have truly been some of the biggest heroes this year. I have been so inspired by them and their diligence to press on despite the circumstances. It will be an awesome day when I get to give them their vaccine and tell them thank you for hanging in there and taking on the impossible task of supporting students through this pandemic.”

Medical professionals like Kensrue understand that vaccinations are just one component of what’s needed to keep communities and schools safe. In a virtual fireside chat with NEA President Becky Pringle on Jan. 28, infectious disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci said, “Even after getting vaccinated, you still have to wear a mask, social distance and wash your hands.”

Some were alarmed by Gov. Gavin Newsom’s January announcement to lift the state’s stay-at-home order. “Have we not learned anything?” said Marcia Santini, a nurse at UCLA Medical Center, in a *Guardian* article. Santini was hospitalized with COVID-19 in December.

A Voice of Science

California’s vaccine progress, safety, and the impact for educators By Frank Wells

Grace Lee, M.D., is chief medical officer for practice innovation and an infectious diseases physician at Stanford Children’s Health, and currently serves on the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) and California’s COVID-19 Scientific Safety Review Workgroup.

What determined educators’ priority in the vaccine rollout?

ACIP sees teachers and educational staff as a critical part of the frontline workforce that is vital for the functioning of society — for kids, parents and others. That was the rationale in including educators in Phase 1b; they need to be in the workplace to effectively do their jobs. It was a priority to protect frontline essential workers.

Explain how vaccines are only one part of the layers of protection — the “Swiss cheese model”?

Currently available vaccines are 95 percent effective, but for the 5 percent where it doesn’t work, that’s one hole in your layer of protection. Even if we [wear masks] most of the time, still another hole exists when we are non-adherent. Another layer is social distancing, and yet another is cohorting.

The goal is to have many layers, so if the virus gets through because one or two holes line up, another layer will protect us. The great thing about the vaccine is it gives us 95 percent protection at two doses, and doesn’t require us to rely on perfect behavior (ourselves and others) to achieve that protection. If we all get vaccinated, we can get to herd immunity much more quickly and safely.

How safe and effective are the currently available vaccines?

Clinical trials published for Pfizer and Moderna were far more inclusive and transparent about their focus on diverse populations than what we typically

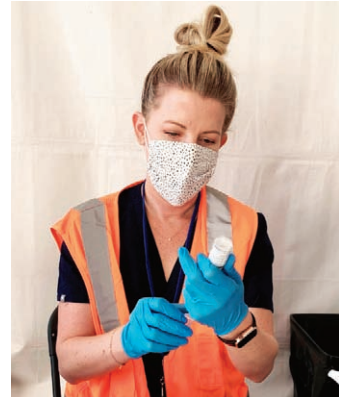


Dr. Grace Lee

“A fireman doesn’t put out half of a fire and hope the rest goes out on its own. Our numbers will shoot back up again and we’ll just keep infecting each other.”

CTA expressed concern about moving too quickly to reopen schools that, unlike Kensrue’s, are currently closed,

particularly as variants of the coronavirus pose new dangers. CTA officers sent a letter to Newsom and other leaders on Jan. 27 urging a “clear and coordinated state, county, and local plan that puts the health and safety of our communities first and does not take shortcuts toward the



see in clinical trials. This was important because people want to know: Is the vaccine going to work for me? Maybe I'm older, maybe I have high-risk medical conditions, maybe I'm worried there are differences by race/ethnicity. [Pfizer and Moderna's trials showed] efficacy by age, race, ethnicity, whether you were considered frontline workers, and including teachers and educational support staff. All groups had high levels of efficacy.

What about children and youth?

Pfizer and Moderna are enrolling people down to age 12, which to effectively reopen high schools is important data to have. For educators and reopening, the hardest has been at high school and university levels, because you can't cohort people as effectively in a bubble as you can in elementary school.

What can most people who get the vaccine expect to experience?

The majority can expect some tenderness and redness at the vaccine site; that's common within two or three days, and usually lasts less than 48 hours. A smaller proportion will have reactions such as headaches, chills and fever within a few days; they are short-lived.

What would you say to someone who's unsure about getting vaccinated?

Risk is extremely high in communities — just look at California. Hospitals are full, and our death rates from COVID are higher than just about anywhere else. If you compare the risk of getting infected in the general population versus vaccine recipients, to me that's proof of why I would want to get a vaccine. Your risk goes way down, and the vaccine seems durable for at least the coming months.

Your thoughts on the overall rollout?

I'm feeling good about the new administration being able to restore the voice of science in our conversations and decision-making, and having the federal government speak with a single voice to where we are in the pandemic, what supplies we have in hand, and what we need ahead. Leadership is critical for us to move forward together.

With effective communication, good national leadership and good planning, I am confident that we'll be able to vaccinate rapidly and protect everyone who wants this protection. I think that's what will make the difference for us all in addressing the pandemic.

path of opening schools in person." To do otherwise, the letter says, "will continue the 'yo-yo' effect we warned of last summer and this fall — opening schools, only to then close them because we failed to have the necessary layered protections and asymptomatic testing in place."

Kensrue soldiers on, noting that the biggest hurdle in the county at the moment is not having enough vaccinators. "Many providers who are able to give vaccines are already overburdened in the hospitals and clinics with our current surge of COVID patients," she says.

Her husband and three daughters have been supportive of her long weekend and evening hours, understanding that what she does is helping the community get through the pandemic a little faster.

"Although the shifts at the vaccine clinics are long (10-hour shifts) and physically demanding, I cannot think of a better way to spend my weekends right now. There is hope in people's eyes and gratitude in their hearts. I plan on being in it for the long haul." ■

Interested medical and nonmedical volunteers in Orange County can sign up at oneoc.org.

RESOURCES AND INFORMATION

CTA CONTINUES TO demand that schools not reopen until they are safe for students, educators and our communities. Vaccines are one component of comprehensive safety efforts. Read CTA's stance on reopening schools and the Jan. 27 letter to state leaders at cta.org/COVID-19.

Be sure to check out CTA's COVID-19 vaccine resources, including FAQs for educators and latest updates, at cta.org/for-educators/covid19/covid-19-vaccine-resources.

Nearly 200,000 flags filled the Capitol Mall, representing those who couldn't attend the inauguration due to the pandemic.



'This Is Democracy's Day'

A historic day of firsts as America inaugurates President Biden, Vice President Harris

By Julian Peeples

ON JAN. 20 at noon on the west steps of the U.S. Capitol, Joseph R. Biden Jr. was inaugurated as the 46th president of the United States. Just prior, California's own Kamala Harris took the oath to become the vice president of the United States — the first woman and the first person of Black and South Asian descent to hold the office.

"This is America's day. This is democracy's day. A day of history and hope, of renewal and resolve," President Biden said. "Today, we celebrate the triumph not of a candidate, but of a cause, the cause of democracy. The will of the people has been heard, and the will of the people has been heeded. We have learned again that democracy is precious. Democracy is fragile. And at this hour, my friends, democracy has prevailed."



Getty Images

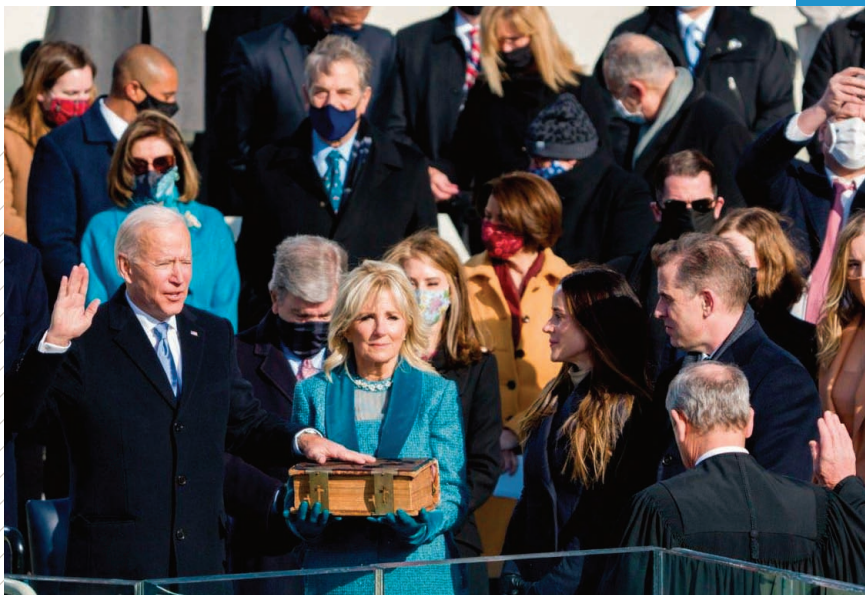
The historic day was full of firsts. Vice President Harris gave the oath of office to her successor in the U.S. Senate, Alex Padilla — the first Latino senator from California. She also swore in newly elected Raphael Warnock (Georgia's first Black senator) and Jon Ossoff (Georgia's first Jewish senator), flipping the balance of power in the Senate.

And Los Angeles native Amanda Gorman, who at 22 was the youngest inaugural poet, moved the crowd and all who watched with her inspiring words.

Biden wasted no time getting to work after the inaugural festivities, signing the first of dozens of executive orders in his initial week to take immediate action on the most pressing issues facing our nation. On his first full day in office, Biden unveiled his \$175 billion plan to safely reopen schools in the

“This is a time of testing. We face an attack on democracy and on truth. A raging virus. Growing inequity. The sting of systemic racism. A climate in crisis. America’s role in the world. Any one of these would be enough to challenge us in profound ways. But the fact is we face them all at once, presenting this nation with the gravest of responsibilities. Now we must step up. All of us.”

—U.S. President **Joseph R. Biden Jr.**



▲ President Biden is sworn in by Chief Justice John Roberts, with first lady Jill Biden and members of his family in attendance.



▲ Vice President Harris is sworn in by Justice Sonia Sotomayor, with second gentleman Doug Emhoff holding the Bibles.

“

Even in dark times, we not only dream, we do. We not only see what has been, we see what can be. ... We are undaunted in our belief that we shall overcome, that we will rise up. This is American aspiration.”

—U.S. Vice President **Kamala Harris**

first 100 days, including \$130 billion for K-12 schools and \$35 billion for higher ed.

The same day, first lady Dr. Jill Biden welcomed NEA President Becky Pringle and American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten to the White House for a virtual meeting with America’s educators.

“From day one of his administration, President Biden is demonstrating he is listening to educators and proving that he understands the complexities of providing students with safe and equitable learning environments during the COVID-19 pandemic,” Pringle said.

Biden has already nominated the most diverse presidential

Cabinet in history, including California Attorney General Xavier Becerra for secretary of health and human services, and Miguel Cardona for secretary of education.

Cardona, in accepting his nomination, spoke of his support for public schools and students. “For too many students, public education in America has been a *flor pálida*: a wilted rose, neglected, in need of care. We must be the master gardeners who cultivate it, who work every day to preserve its beauty and its purpose.”

For a full list of Cabinet nominees, go to our online story at cta.org/inauguration.



Courtesy U.S. Department of Defense



“The Hill We Climb”

*We are striving to forge our union with purpose.
To compose a country committed to all cultures,
colors, characters and conditions of man.
And so we lift our gaze, not to what stands between
us, but what stands before us.*

...
*The new dawn balloons as we free it.
For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to
see it.
If only we're brave enough to be it.*

Excerpts from “The Hill We Climb” by National Youth Poet Laureate **Amanda Gorman**, daughter of Los Angeles teacher Joan Wicks.

Amanda Gorman reads her inaugural poem.

“It’s the honor and privilege of a lifetime to serve as a voice for all Californians at this critical moment in our nation’s history. As the proud son of immigrants from Mexico, I’m committed to working as hard as my parents did to build a better future for the next generation.”

—U.S. Senator **Alex Padilla**

▼ Vice President Harris gives the oath of office to Sens. Raphael Warnock of Georgia, Alex Padilla of California, and Jon Ossoff of Georgia.

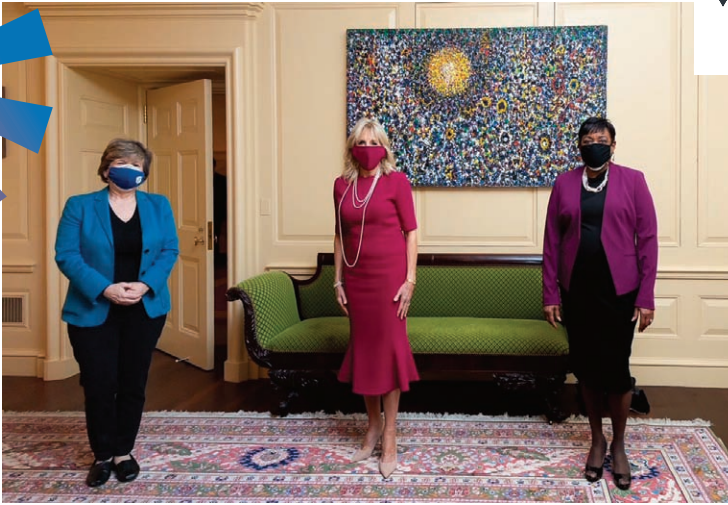


“

That Kamala Harris, a product of California public schools, is our vice president – the first woman and first person of Black and South Asian descent to hold the office – makes us proud and gives us hope for the future. Our children can look to her to see what is possible.”

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**

◀ The president, vice president and their spouses at the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool.



▼ First lady Jill Biden, center, with AFT President Randi Weingarten, left, and NEA President Becky Pringle at the White House.



“Educators are encouraged not only by President Biden’s leadership, but also by knowing that there is finally a true partner in the White House who will prioritize students by working with educators in the decision-making process. There is much work that needs to be done, and the path will not be easy, but there is now a new dawn in America.”

—NEA President **Becky Pringle**

“Educators, this is our moment! We know how to be a light in the darkness, and Joe is going to be a champion for you. You will always have a seat at the table.”

—Dr. **Jill Biden**, first lady and NEA member

▼ President Biden signed more than 30 executive orders during his first week in office.

Biden Takes Immediate Action to Address Crises

TAKING OFFICE AT a time when the nation faces some of the greatest challenges in its history, President Biden began working almost immediately after the inauguration, signing a series of executive orders and taking actions during his first week, including:

- Directing the education secretary to assist states in deciding whether and how to safely reopen schools for in-person learning, and coordinate the collection of data to inform safe reopening. Biden asked Congress to provide at least \$130 billion to K-12 schools, and \$350 billion in state and local aid that would help districts avoid lay-offs and close budget gaps. He also proposed reimbursing states for costs necessary to reopening schools through the FEMA Disaster Relief Fund and proposed additional resources to help schools to establish screening, testing and tracing programs.
- Rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement, a global pact to reduce carbon emissions.
- Rejoining the World Health Organization.
- Revoking the so-called Muslim ban, which restricted foreign nationals from seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the U.S.



- Directing the Department of Homeland Security to preserve and strengthen Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), to protect undocumented immigrants who were brought to the U.S. as children.
- Halting construction and funding of the border wall.
- Enforcing sex discrimination protections within the federal government.
- Revoking the Pentagon’s ban on transgender people serving in the military.

For more of Biden’s early actions and executive orders, go to cta.org/inauguration.



Jennifer Adolfsen, left, handles simultaneous instruction - with students both in person and online.

TALES FROM THE TRENCHES

What it's *really* like at schools that reopened during the pandemic

As told to **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**

CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS CLOSED in March 2020 due to COVID-19, but some were granted waivers in the fall and reopened (over the objections of CTA, which believes schools should not be reopened until it is completely safe to do so). For educators who returned to the classroom as the pandemic raged on, it was like being in a science fiction movie with masks, gloves, sanitizer, plastic partitions and fear.

Some educators taught students sitting in front of them as well as students online at the same time, in what has been called “concurrent” or “simultaneous” instruction. There was no guidebook for how to teach in a pandemic or offer simultaneous instruction. But CTA members figured it out as they went along, many with little training. Some were provided with ample hand sanitizer, plastic partitions and air purifiers; others purchased their own.

Following are reflections of teachers who returned to in-person teaching during COVID-19 before vaccines became available. (Their circumstances may have changed by the time this issue goes to press.)



WE HAVE TO RETHINK IT ALL

JENNIFER ADOLFSON, *Manteca Educators Association, an eighth grade math, English and social studies teacher, instructs students online and in person simultaneously at Sequoia Elementary School. Students alternate between attending shortened days of in-school classes and online learning, to allow for social distancing.*

WE HAVE A log to keep track of who's in the bathroom, to prevent crowds. Students bring their own water bottles, and we have refilling stations instead of water fountains. Students don't eat lunch; they finish at 1 p.m. and go home, so masks stay on. It's very different, and I'm always waiting for the other shoe to drop.



Jennifer Adolfson

“Things I thought would work didn’t. So I keep trying different things.”

I was happy to come back. I missed my students. But it’s stressful when I get phone calls saying a student is being pulled from class to quarantine because someone in their family has COVID. Students and their families have been heavily impacted.

I feel pretty safe. It’s like going to the store with my mask on. We check students’ temperatures when they arrive. We sanitize. But sometimes I worry.

I thought a “whole class” approach might work, but instead it felt like I was teaching two separate classes. I had to make a shift. Now my online students have direct instruction on Microsoft Teams with students in class, then I release them for independent work and focus on students in front of me. My job is to follow up on independent work so that when students show up, their work at home is meaningful.

It’s hard to wrap my brain around teaching in person and online at the same time. Things I thought would work didn’t. So I keep trying different things. These days, teachers have to rethink it all.



IT PUSHED ME TO LEARN NEW WAYS OF DOING THINGS

MICHAEL LEE, Saddleback Valley Educators Association, a science teacher at El Toro High School in Lake Forest, teaches students online and in person simultaneously. Students alternate between Zoom days and in-person learning days, which keeps in-person classes smaller for social distancing.

IT’S A CHALLENGE to maintain student engagement in a normal class setting. But when you have two sets of students — one sitting in the classroom and another on Zoom at the same time — it’s harder. There’s a lot of back and forth with both groups checking for understanding. You have to see who is raising their hands to

ask questions in two locations. Rather than focusing on *what* you are going to teach, it’s mostly *how*.



Michael Lee

“It has increased my workload tremendously. People on the outside don’t understand how much work it is.”

I convert all my documents into digital format so I can screen-share with students on Zoom and allow them to see what’s on the whiteboard in class. I consider myself tech-savvy, and it’s still challenging. Sometimes I discover I’m not sharing the same thing with in-person and online students and double back.

When you are doing distance learning only, you can do breakout rooms and group activities. But when you are also teaching a live class, it’s not possible, so student collaboration is harder.

It has increased my workload tremendously. I work nights and weekends. People on the outside don’t understand how much work it is.

This has pushed us into learning new ways of doing things. In a way, are all first-year teachers again.





THE HARDEST TIME OF MY CAREER

KATHY ADAIR, *Saddleback Valley Educators Association*, teaches fourth grade at *Trabuco Mesa Elementary School in Rancho Santa Margarita*. In her class, “hybrid” instruction means teaching two in-person sessions daily, morning and afternoon. When students are not physically in the classroom, they work at home on asynchronous online lessons that she created. This allows for smaller classes and social distancing, without Adair having to teach in-person and online students simultaneously.



Kathy Adair

“I am happy being back with my students, but I don’t let myself get too comfortable.”

BEFORE STUDENTS RETURNED, our school created a welcome video so they would feel confident and unafraid. It showed how to wear a mask, where to wash their hands, and why there are plastic shields at their desks.

I wanted to celebrate the students coming back to school. I had a “welcome back” bag at each desk filled with goodies. I am happy being back with my students, but I don’t let myself get too comfortable. Safety is always on my mind.

The kids were happy to come back. They don’t care about masks. They don’t mind sitting apart from each other. They are so resilient. They are doing better with hybrid learning than distance learning only because they are more engaged in the lesson. The

best part for me is having a smaller class with only 17 students.

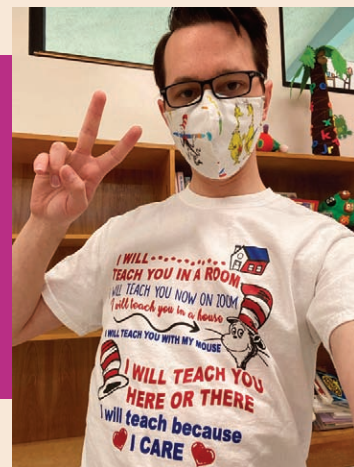
Hybrid instruction is time-consuming. I teach two sets of students in person per day, but I differentiate. I prepare the morning group to do the asynchronous lesson in the afternoon based on their morning lesson. I prepare my afternoon group to do the next day’s lesson that they will begin asynchronously by themselves the next morning. It took me a long time to figure out how to do this.

I’m preparing parent conferences on Zoom, and trying to meet students’ social and emotional needs with weekly check-ins. After weeks, I’m finally getting into a rhythm. It’s the hardest thing I have done in my 30-year career.



SPECIAL EDUCATION HAS DIFFERENT CHALLENGES

STEVEN SEVERANCE, *Garden Grove Education Association*, teaches kindergartners and first graders with moderate to severe disabilities at *Thomas Paine Elementary School*. Half his class, about 10 students, attend in person. He live-streams simultaneously to instruct the rest of his students, whose parents opted for online learning.





LIKE SPINNING PLATES IN THE AIR

DENISE McLEAN, *Enterprise Elementary Teachers Association, a math teacher at Parsons Junior High in Redding, teaches students in person and online concurrently. She may have two to five students in quarantine on any given day. Student cohorts attend classes and lunch together.*

I FEEL LIKE I'm spinning plates in the air! And I am constantly adding more plates and trying to keep them from dropping. It's a juggling act.

I have two computers running. I teach off one of them, and it connects to the smart board for the kids in class. My other computer is so I can monitor the kids who are online, and they can see my face (as a thumbnail) as well as the presentation on the smart board projected by the other computer.

I make videos on Screencastify, which students can see at home. My kids with IEPs watch them over and over. I have found that it really helps for students to watch videos.

Kids in class jump on their computers and do Google Meets to visit online at lunchtime, and I mute myself

when they are visiting classmates, including those at home. It's a way for them to socialize.

The pandemic has changed my teaching completely. And even though I've never worked harder, there are parts of this new style of teaching I am not willing to give up when things get back to normal. My teaching has gotten better because I have been learning more about technology.

My biggest concern is keeping their attention. But I'm making it work, and so are my students. Amazingly, we are only two weeks behind where we were last year. I'm so proud of them.



Denise McLean

“My teaching has gotten better because I have been learning more about technology.”

SPECIAL EDUCATION HAS different challenges than other classrooms. It's impossible for staff to keep 6 feet away because many students require assistance to do any major task. We have issues of bodily fluids and also aggression with kicking, scratching and biting that put other students at risk during normal times, but especially during COVID. Masks are a challenge for students with sensory concerns.

We have plastic partitions at desks. I had to tape them down because on day one they went flying off the desks. We are sanitizing and taking temperatures, and so far, there have been no outbreaks.

Teaching simultaneously to students in class and at home is challenging. Those at school have “transitions” that take

a long time, like bathroom breaks and recess, and kids at home are staring at the screen waiting for us to come back. I reposition the camera whenever I go to the whiteboard so students at home can see me. I make slides that can be viewed at home and in the classroom.

I was opposed to going back for health and safety concerns. Now I feel conflicted because students have more positive educational outcomes when they are here — and I am happy to see them. But my concerns about cleanliness and social distancing in a special education environment have been confirmed. Precautions that work on paper may not always happen in the classroom.

“I'm happy to see students, but my concerns about cleanliness and social distancing in a special ed environment have been confirmed.”





I FEEL LIKE AN OCTOPUS

COREY MORTON, *Napa Valley Educators Association*, is a fifth grade teacher at Willow Elementary School. She teaches in person and virtually at the same time. Students attend in person on alternating days to allow for fewer students in class and social distancing.



Corey Morton

I HAVE A document camera that projects onto the Promethean board, and I “carry” my virtual kids around the room with me on an iPad so they can see on Zoom what the in-person students are seeing. I have a plastic partition I also carry when I need to get close to students to help them. I feel like an octopus.

“We are building relationships in this crazy environment and focusing on what we can do instead of what we can’t.”

When my school closed, I was concerned about health issues and also the loss of learning from students not being in the classroom. It was hard teaching them at home while competing with television, computer games and extra tabs open on their computers. Because of this, I was happy to come back.

There are two fifth grade teachers at our school, and we decided to split the work. I teach math, and she teaches language arts. Instead of each of us having 32 kids, we have 64 and are responsible for all the kids. When she is teaching English concurrently to live and online students in morning and afternoon student cohorts, I’m monitoring the virtual kids she is instructing and making sure they pay attention. I am also monitoring a separate group of children that log in for extra support. When it’s my turn, she does the same for me.

I would call it a well-run three-ring circus. We made it work because we agreed to work together.

We take time to connect with students on an emotional level through community circle time, and we invite everyone to log in during lunch to hang out together. We are building relationships in this crazy environment and focusing on what we *can* do instead of what we can’t.



NEW GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

CTA’s Instruction and Professional Development Department (IPD) has created a new distance/hybrid learning guide, “An Overview: Distance and Hybrid Teaching Practices.” In addition to a practical, classroom-level review of distance and hybrid instructional practices for all educators, the guide contains suggestions for chapter leaders to consider when discussing hybrid schedules with schools and districts — core principles for balanced, pedagogically sound and physically safe hybrid schedules that meet all state requirements, plus sample hybrid schedules for grades TK-12.

The guide and many other useful distance and hybrid teaching resources are available for download on the updated and improved CTA IPD website at cta.org/ipd.



THIS IS NOT A “WASH YEAR”

KRYSTAL MONTALVO is an English teacher at Spring Valley High School and a member of the Grossmont Education Association, which negotiated a reopening that has flexible block scheduling. She teaches students in person and online simultaneously and has up to four students physically in the classroom at one time.



Krystal Montalvo

“My students deserve a quality education, even during a pandemic.”

I PURCHASED plastic dividers for students, and I purchased one for myself that goes around my desk. I’m 6 feet away from students, and students are 6 feet away from each other. We are color-coded with dots on chairs so that all the students in Period 2 sit on the same pink dots and all the students in Period 4 sit on the same orange dots each time, and so on.

Some were excited to come back; others came back grudgingly and weren’t ready to do school because it had been so long. We spent a

lot of time building relationships.

I share my computer screen with my Zoom students so they can see what I’m teaching. They can see each other, but they can’t see students who are in the actual classroom. They see me as a little square talking to them.

I let students know I’m on their side, and that I understand that it’s difficult and challenging and a mess, but that I want them all to do high-quality work and think about what they are going to accomplish, so everything they are going through will be worth it. It makes me uncomfortable when I hear others saying 2020 is a “wash year.” It’s not a wash year to me because my students deserve a quality education, even during a pandemic.



SURVIVING SIMULTANEOUS INSTRUCTION

Tips from the educators in our story:

- Make safety your first priority.
- Don't be too hard on yourself.
- Consider students' social-emotional needs.
- Accept that things will take longer and it's OK to let some things go.
- Make videos of yourself teaching so students can watch them repeatedly.
- Focus more on topics that are not going to be covered at the next grade level, and less on those that are.
- Be prepared to switch tactics if necessary.
- Make slides that can be viewed by both groups of students.
- Reach out to other teachers for support or to collaborate.
- Set boundaries regarding how much you work and your accessibility to students and parents.



Women Educators Caught in a Bind

Pandemic forces many to choose between career, family By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

IN JULY, Erika Martinez resigned from her teaching position at Liberty Elementary School in Tulare. With her school on the verge of resuming in-person instruction, Martinez quit her job to protect her 3-year-old daughter, parents and herself during a pandemic. It was an agonizing decision.

Martinez has multiple sclerosis, and was worried that COVID-19 would worsen her condition. She also feared that her daughter could become ill or become a COVID carrier and infect her parents, who provided day care.

She thought about requesting a leave of absence. But for the good of her second graders, she decided to resign,

because she feared that otherwise they might have a revolving door of substitute teachers. It was the ultimate sacrifice for this 13-year classroom teacher, who served as president of the Liberty Teachers Association.

Pandemic pushes women out of the workforce

Martinez is part of a growing wave of females being forced out of the workforce due to COVID-19, as women shoulder the responsibility of family and child rearing — especially during a time of sickness and economic upheaval.

“I want to be a role model for my daughter and show her a woman can succeed as much as a man. But being a woman is hard. We have to juggle it all. And the pandemic is stretching us very, very thin.”

—Erika Martinez, former president of Liberty Teachers Association



Erika Martinez with her daughter Grace.

While the surging virus has taken a toll on the overall job market — the Labor Department reported in December the loss of 140,000 non-farming jobs, a monthly job loss for the first time since April — women are bearing the brunt of the pandemic’s impact. That’s because they are disproportionately employed in the service and health care industries, which have been hit the hardest, in addition to having family obligations.

Four times as many women as men dropped out of the labor force in September — roughly 865,000 women compared with 216,000 men — mostly due to the need for child care, according to a Center for American Progress report, “How COVID-19 Sent Women’s Workforce Progress Backward.”

With schools and day care facilities closed in the pandemic, someone has to stay home with children and oversee distance learning. The lower-salaried spouse, usually the woman due to gender inequity in the workplace, typically fills that role.

According to “The Hidden Impact of COVID-19 on Educators,” a report by Horace Mann published in December, 27 percent of teachers are considering quitting — at least temporarily — because of COVID. This mirrors a 2020 study by the Lean In organization, which found a quarter of women working in corporate America are considering “downshifting” their careers or leaving their jobs because of the pandemic.

Some are cutting back

The Lean In report found mothers with young children have arranged work hour reductions that are four to five times greater than fathers in the age of COVID.

Katina Rondeau, a single mother, is among women in the workforce who have reduced hours and taken a

pay cut during the pandemic. She teaches an independent study program at Hilltop High School in San Diego for students who are not able to succeed in the regular classroom, and was named Teacher of the Year in 2007 and 2018 by her district.

She was managing to teach remotely with her 9-year-old son at home, says the Sweetwater Education Association member. But then her school requested that in addition to teaching online classes, Rondeau come to campus each day to work with students doing credit recovery under a “canopy” that offered connectivity to their devices. She had no one to care for her son, so she declined the extra hours after already taking a 30 percent pay reduction, due to cuts made to her program during the pandemic.

“I asked myself, ‘Is it really worth it?’” recalls Rondeau, who has a master’s in special education. “If we were to be called back, my son would be able to go to school in a hybrid model just a few days a week and I would be expected to work every day. How is that possible without child care? I was also worried about exposing my child — and myself — to COVID. So I decided to continue working at home, have my child stay home, and work fewer hours.”

Union protection helps

CTA chapters are demanding safe working conditions. And by working remotely, some teachers like Rondeau





Single mother Katina Rondeau took a pay cut and is working fewer hours so she can work from home while her 9-year-old son, pictured, attends school from home.

“Women carry the children during pregnancy — and also during the pandemic.”

—Katina Rondeau, Sweetwater Education Association

are able to juggle teaching and caring for their own children in a safe manner. But even for those working remotely, teaching and taking care of young children can be overwhelming, and some are either quitting or taking an unpaid leave of absence.

Tracy Maniscalco, a chemistry teacher at Montgomery High School in Santa Rosa, was teaching remotely from home, caring for her 5-year-old daughter and 7-year-old son, and burning the candle at both ends.

“I would Zoom with my own students when my children were napping, and do lesson planning after my kids went to bed. I was up until 2 or 3 every morning. It was not sustainable. I was trying to do it all — but after a while I just couldn’t. One time my son started crying in the middle of my Zoom class because he had a rock stuck up his nose. My high school students thought it was hysterical, but it was stressful.”

She found support from the Santa Rosa Teachers Association, which negotiated a memorandum of understanding allowing teachers to go on unpaid leave during the pandemic. She had initially resigned to care for children and coordinate their distance learning. But after the MOU was negotiated, the district rescinded her resignation and allowed her and others to take a year’s personal leave.

“Our union fought for us,” she says.

She plans on resuming teaching next August, and hopes it is safe for her children’s school to reopen by then. She and her husband, who works in the medical field, decided together that due to her teaching experience, she was the logical choice when it came to who would stay home.

“I love my students, but I have to prioritize my family and my mental health.”

Stacey Strong Ortega, a member of the Orange Unified Education Association who has taught first grade for 21 years at Nohl Canyon Elementary School in Anaheim Hills, is also on leave.

Strong Ortega has three children — twin girls in first grade and a son in fourth grade. Their school in Westminster resumed in-person learning two days a week, for a few hours each day, combined with distance learning. But her son has asthma, which puts him at risk for COVID complications, so all her children are learning remotely.



Stacey Strong Ortega

All was going well when she was teaching from home. Her family created a routine and were, in fact, “rocking it,” says Strong Ortega, who shares parenting duties with her husband. Then her district announced in-person learning would resume at the end of September, and teachers had to come back.

“Teachers were understandably hesitant,” she says. “A lot of teachers had children at home and were stuck between choosing their family over their job and financial security. Also, a lot of classrooms, especially the school where I was at, have no windows. The buildings are ’70s style, with pods that all share the same air. It was scary.”

Teachers feared for their safety but were told that since their contract did not have language allowing teachers to work from home during a pandemic, they must return. Strong Ortega would have preferred to continue working at home. But her district, unlike surrounding districts, did not offer educators that choice. So, she went on leave.

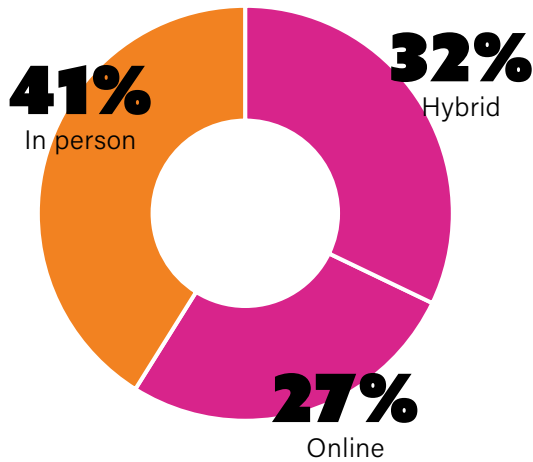




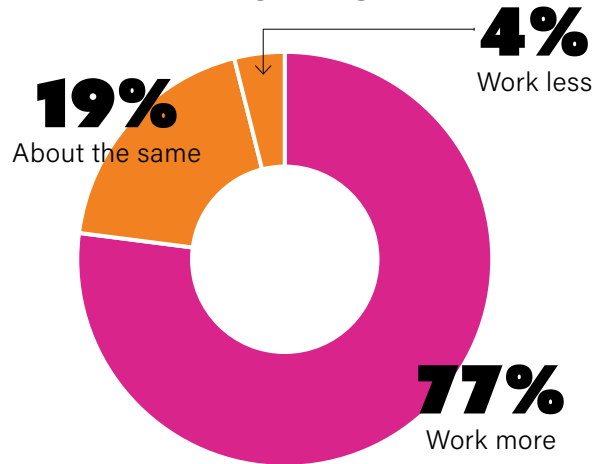
COVID-19's Impact on Educators

The Horace Mann Educator Health & Well-Being Study surveyed 1,240 U.S. educators ages 21-64 in October and November 2020. Respondents included public school K-12 teachers, administrators and support personnel. Key findings:

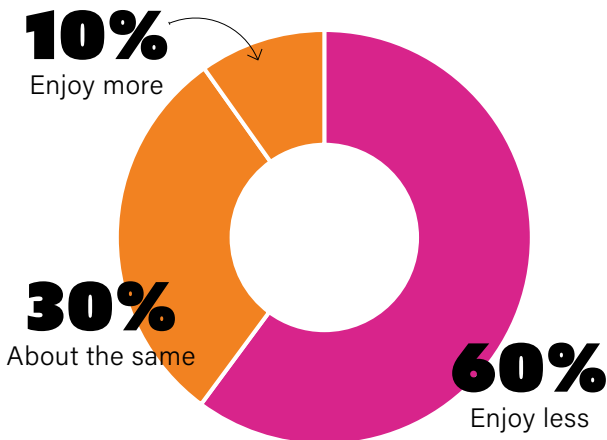
Educators' work environments in 2020-21 school year



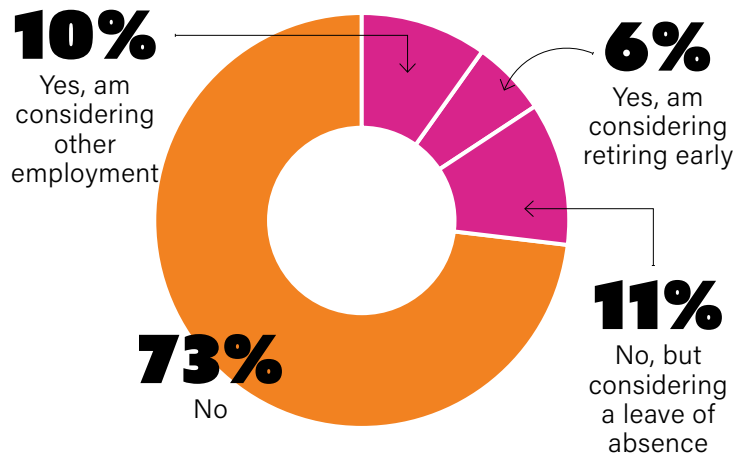
Educator workload vs. a year ago



Educator job satisfaction vs. a year ago

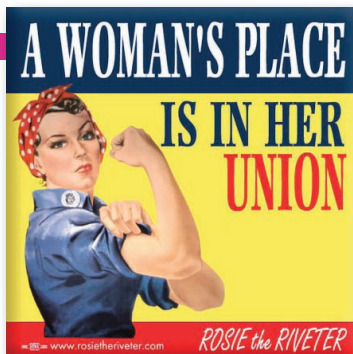


Educators considering leaving profession due to COVID-19



From "The Hidden Impact of COVID-19 on Educators: Rising Health Concerns, Lower Risk Tolerance and Benefit Gaps." For more, see horacemann.com.

rosietheriveter.com



EDUCATORS: THE UNION DIFFERENCE

IN A REVIEW of essential workers in May 2020, the Economic Policy Institute summarized the benefits of unions in a pandemic, including protection for expressing concerns about unsafe environments, collective bargaining to help obtain PPE and other safety measures, higher likelihood of having expanded leave and health care coverage, etc. (Essential workers were defined as those working in “essential industries,” mostly in health care, food and agriculture, and the industrial, commercial, residential facilities and services industry.)

The review showed that only 12 percent of essential workers are covered by a union contract, and some of the highest-risk industries — those more likely to employ women, people of color, and low-income workers most impacted by the pandemic — also have the lowest unionization rates, including health care at only 10 percent, and food and agriculture at only 8 percent.

By comparison, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in January 2020, the unionization rate was 33.1 percent in education, training and library services.

This means educators have better union protections than other female-dominated industries. “There is no better time to have a union,” says the Century Foundation in a June 2020 review of workers’ collective power during COVID-19. “They are helping workers survive the pandemic by negotiating safety standards, pay improvements, and contract provisions that help blunt the effects of layoffs, as well as serving as a powerful voice in local, state, and national conversations about workplace issues.”

Teaching while caring for her children was “not sustainable” for Tracy Maniscalco. She ended up taking an unpaid leave negotiated by her union.



“In addition to being a financial kick in the pants, it’s difficult because being a teacher is my identity and who I am,” she says. “I strongly believe that unions need to continue to stand up and fight for what is right and protect their members.”

Martinez, the chapter president who quit, says that nearly all the teachers at her single-school K-8 district were in favor of returning to school. But her chapter members supported her decision to resign, she says, and she remains friendly with them.

Families are hurting

Women educators who have quit or taken unpaid leaves from work say they are relying on their savings, spending less, and trying to live on a tighter budget.

“We use a lot of natural lighting to cut down on electricity,” says Rondeau. “We are not spending as much, and I’m not commuting and driving around, so I’m not paying much for gas. It’s difficult financially, but I am allowed to be home with my child. Many families don’t have that luxury.”

Being on a leave of absence has been tough, says Maniscalco, who says that living on her husband’s income makes her feel like “a high-tech 1950s housewife” at times.

“Our income dropped dramatically, which forced us to cut all nonessentials, but thankfully we had an emergency fund, so we were able to handle my not working for a year. I spent time this



Tracy Maniscalco

“I love my students, but I have to prioritize my family and my mental health.”

—Tracy Maniscalco, Santa Rosa Teachers Association

Maniscalco's 7-year-old son, left, and 5-year-old daughter, below, attend online class.

When Stacey Strong Ortega finished teaching remotely, she and her children worked together in their living room.



“In addition to being a financial kick in the pants, [being on unpaid leave] is difficult because being a teacher is my identity and who I am.”

—Stacey Strong Ortega, Orange Unified Education Association

summer taking free budgeting seminars, figuring out meal planning and learning to cook. When we both worked, we had the luxury of takeout meals. Now I'm cooking all the time, which is ironic, because even though I'm a chemistry teacher, I'm not the best cook.”

Martinez says her family is “cutting corners,” tightening their belt and relying on savings. Her husband has taken on side jobs and extra hours at his job to make ends meet. She has also taken on a side job scoring writing assessments for a testing company that prepares students for standardized tests on the East Coast.

“Compared to what I was making, it's nothing. But every little bit helps. It's something I can do at home, and it keeps my mind active.”

What's the impact on society?

With women being pushed out of the workplace, experts fear that decades of progress will be undone in terms of gender pay equity and opportunity.

“Women's disproportionate responsibilities at home were already a major contributing factor to their lower pay and difficulty advancing at work,” asserts a December story at [vox.com](https://www.vox.com). “Now men will have an even greater advantage when it comes to increased opportunities, promotions and raises.”



Erika Martinez

“It's unfair,” says Rondeau. “Women carry the children during pregnancy — and also during the pandemic.”

The long-term consequences for those who quit or go on leave include less retirement money for the future. Teachers who go on personal leave have their retirement funds put on hold while they are not in the classroom. And many already had their retirement held while on maternity leave.

Teachers pushed out during the pandemic may decide not to return to teaching when they reenter the workplace, which will no doubt exacerbate the teacher shortage.

Strong Ortega believes that women exiting the workforce is not just bad for women — it's bad for everybody.

“It's not setting a good example for our students or our children in terms of women taking a hit and being considered expendable,” she says. “How long will it take to get our jobs back when this is over? Will our jobs be there when this is over?”

Martinez, who has a master's degree, plans on rejoining the workforce, but isn't sure whether it will be as a teacher.

“I want to be a role model for my daughter and show her a woman can succeed as much as a man. But being a woman is hard. We have to juggle it all. We wear many hats. We have many roles. And the pandemic is stretching us very, very thin.” ■



Record Education Funding in Proposed State Budget

Gov. Newsom's budget includes summer school, extra learning time to rebound from COVID-19

By Julian Peeples

WITH SCHOOL DISTRICTS and colleges reeling from COVID-19 impacts, Gov. Gavin Newsom's initial budget proposal of \$227 billion for next fiscal year includes record education funding for K-12 schools and community colleges — \$85.8 billion in Proposition 98 guaranteed funding, a \$14.9 billion increase from last year. Much of it is one-time funding, but it comes at a time when the resources are needed most.

The proposal includes \$4.6 billion for summer school and extra learning time to support struggling students, those with special needs, English learners, and those with housing insecurity; \$500 million for educator professional development; \$225 million to improve the state's educator pipeline; \$700 million to support students struggling with anxiety, depression, stress and other disorders; and an additional \$300 million for special education.

For community colleges, the budget proposal includes \$250 million for emergency financial aid for students in need and an additional \$100 million to support students with housing and food insecurity.

"We are encouraged by Gov. Newsom's continued commitment to California's students and working families as outlined in his state budget proposal," says CTA President E. Toby Boyd. "The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the impact of historic disinvestment in California public schools. It is vital that we create safe learning environments for all students, especially the most vulnerable, amid the worst surge of the pandemic yet."

The governor's budget includes \$2 billion in ongoing Proposition 98 funding to provide a 3.84 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA). This includes both a 2.31 percent COLA for 2020-21 and 1.5 percent COLA for 2021-22. Per-student spending is projected to be \$18,837 in 2020-21 and \$18,000 in 2021-22 — the highest level of per-pupil spending in state history. (According to 2018-19 numbers, the most recent available, California ranks 20th in per-pupil spending at \$12,879. Estimates for 2020 are \$13,200.)



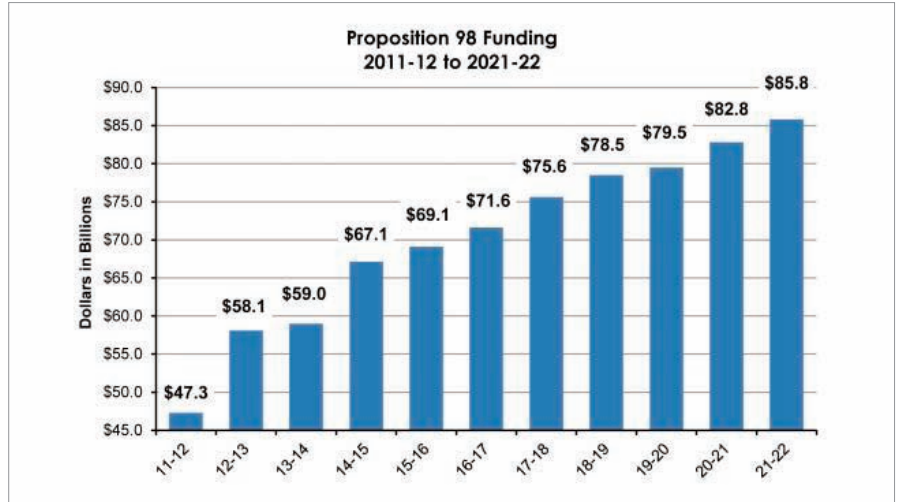
Gavin Newsom

The proposal also pays off all but \$3.7 billion in deferrals needed to balance last year's budget.

The budget also includes \$786 million in new money

Proposed K-14 education funding, Governor's Budget Summary, 2021-22.

for California State University and University of California, an increase of 3 percent from last year. It calls for one-time funding of \$30 million for the CSU system and \$15 million for the UC system to help with housing, food insecurity, mental health and technology issues for students.



Inequities in district reopening incentives

In an effort to incentivize local school districts to reopen for in-person instruction, the budget includes \$2 billion for In-Person Instruction Grants, which would provide additional funding and resources for school districts to begin offering in-person instruction for some students as soon as Feb. 16 and all elementary students by March 16 — part of Newsom’s “Safe Schools for All” plan. Base grant amounts would be \$450 per student, increasing to more than \$700 per pupil for schools with a high enrollment of low-income students, youth in foster care, and English learners.

This plan has already garnered criticism and opposition from legislators. In addition, superintendents of seven of the largest school districts in the state (Los Angeles, San Diego, Fresno, Long Beach, San Francisco, Oakland and Sacramento) warned Newsom in a letter that the plan fails to address the needs of urban school districts, does not address the disproportionate impact COVID is having on low-income communities of color, and reverses a decade-long commitment to equity-based funding.

“While pleased that ‘Safe Schools for All’ prioritizes the reopening of public schools with substantial funding, we cannot ignore that the plan fails to address the needs of the urban school districts that serve nearly a quarter of California students, almost all of whom live below the poverty level,” the superintendents wrote.

Many of the superintendents have already indicated they will not apply for the grant, instead moving forward with their own reopening plans when it is safe to do so. LAUSD’s school board also authorized to sue the state if the proposal becomes a reality.

Health and safety remain highest priority

With uncontrolled COVID spread across the state, Boyd says, CTA continues to support full distance learning for all schools in the purple tier (greatest health risk). Protecting the health and safety of educators and students should be the guiding principle.

“We share many of the concerns that the superintendents and others have articulated about the structure and implementation of the governor’s proposed reopening plan. We look forward to

continuing to work with the administration and the Legislature on ensuring a safe reopening of all public schools. We eagerly await the day we can safely return to our classrooms, where we know our students learn best and thrive.”

Boyd says educators are ready to provide additional learning supports to students who have been struggling during the pandemic.

“The attention to the immediate needs of Californians comes at a critical time, and we appreciate the budget plan’s support for struggling students, those with

special needs, English learners, and those who have housing insecurities. Together with parents and administrators, we will work toward solutions that best meet the needs of our students.”

Public education accounts for approximately 40 percent of all state general fund spending. Funding received by school districts fluctuates annually based on revenues, per capita personal income, and school attendance.

The State Legislature is reviewing the proposed budget prior to Gov. Newsom’s May Revision. The budget must be passed before midnight on June 15. ■

“We look forward to continuing to work with the administration and the Legislature on ensuring a safe reopening of all public schools. We eagerly await the day we can safely return to our classrooms, where we know our students learn best and thrive.”

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**

The Time Is Now

CTA co-sponsors landmark ethnic studies legislation

By Julian Peeples

CALIFORNIA COULD BE the first state in the nation to require all students to take ethnic studies to graduate high school if lawmakers are successful in ushering CTA co-sponsored AB 101 through the Legislature and to the governor's desk.

Authored by Assembly Member Jose Medina (D-Riverside), AB 101 would make the completion of an ethnic studies class a California high school graduation requirement at a time when educators, students and elected leaders say it's needed most.

"We are poised to lead the nation in educational equality and equity," Medina said at a Jan. 27 press conference. "The time for ethnic studies is now!"

Supporters are hoping this is finally the year the requirement becomes a reality after numerous disappointments, including last year when Medina's AB 331 passed the Legislature and was vetoed by Gov. Gavin Newsom. CTA State Council delegates voted in January to co-sponsor AB 101, which would go into effect for students graduating in the 2029-30 school year and require schools to offer an ethnic studies course starting in 2025-26.

Science educator Pia VanMeter said ethnic studies is far too important to be left as an option.

"When students learn to appreciate diverse histories and experiences, it makes them well-rounded individuals," said VanMeter, a member of Riverside City Teachers Association. "They also become more self-aware, empathetic, understanding and civically engaged citizens of the world. This lesson has always been our mission as educators, regardless of what subject we teach."

Medina said that despite decades of scholarship and activism, ethnic studies has not been integrated into K-12 classrooms, which means many students graduate high school without exposure to a culturally comprehensive education and lack understanding of our country's diverse and complex history.

CTA believes:

- Participation in ethnic studies has positive effects for all students. Providing these learning opportunities and engagement with the study of race and equity boosts achievement in other academic areas and promotes a positive identity.



Pia VanMeter speaks at the January press conference on AB 101.

- We have a duty to teach our youth about their ancestral legacies.
- Culture is essential in the fight for racial justice and equity.
- It is the right of all California students to have access to quality ethnic studies curriculum.

"It is our duty as educators to prepare the next generation of changemakers. Students look to us to lead by example. This means we must do the impactful, lifesaving work of building awareness and compassion through the stories of Black, Indigenous and people of color," VanMeter said. "We have a chance at making the world a better place today."

"We must do the impactful and lifesaving work of building awareness and compassion through the stories of Black, Indigenous and people of color."

—Pia VanMeter,
Riverside City Teachers Association

Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond said the continued rise in acts of racism nationwide and the Jan. 6 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol by white supremacists show why this education is so crucial.

AB 101 is currently awaiting a hearing by the Assembly Education Committee. ■

Draft Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum: A Work in Progress

IN JANUARY, CTA submitted comments to the state Instructional Quality Commission on the third draft of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, which educators will be able to use to develop curriculum for the implementation of an ethnic studies course. CTA leaders said the draft still needs improvements to provide useful guidance to educators.

"This model curriculum, being the first in the nation, needs to be one that California teachers can use meaningfully, intentionally and effectively," CTA President E. Toby Boyd wrote in the letter to the IQC.

To read more about the curriculum and CTA's letter to the commission, go to cta.org/educator/posts/cta-co-sponsors-landmark-ethnic-studies-legislation.

Educators to State Leaders: Pandemic Plan Urgently Needed

ON BEHALF OF teachers, nurses, counselors and education support professionals eager to return to in-person teaching and learning, the CTA officers sent a letter to Gov. Newsom on Jan. 27 calling for an aggressive statewide plan to limit the transmission of COVID-19 over the next 100 days. The letter urges Gov. Newsom to engage in full partnership with national leaders on a coordinated, federally funded plan with clarity and common sense to address returning to schools in person during the pandemic.

The letter reiterates what educators, working with epidemiologists and workplace safety medical experts, have said from the beginning: Low community transmission rates, a strong public health infrastructure, and layered prevention measures within schools that are effectively maintained, tracked and enforced are the path forward. Those actions, combined with an effective vaccine rollout, are necessary to get our schools open for in-person teaching and learning.

As COVID-19 variants pose new dangers to community health and safety, it's even more critical to have a cohesive plan in place. To read the full letter, go to cta.org/COVID-19.

CTA Joins Amicus Briefs

CTA JOINED Service Employees International Union, United Farm Workers of America, and numerous other unions in a coalition to file amicus briefs in support of two new emergency regulations intended to slow the spread of COVID-19 that were targeted in lawsuits filed late last year.

After Cal/OSHA adopted the emergency regulations in November, two sets of industry groups (National Retail Federation and Western Growers Association) filed suits to block implementation of the critically important workplace protections — specifically challenging key provisions that require employers to provide paid leave to workers who need to quarantine because they have contracted or been exposed to COVID-19 in the workplace.

The amicus briefs highlight the role that workplaces have played in the COVID-19 outbreak, particularly those workplaces in which employers have not followed public health guidance, and the importance of the emergency regulations in protecting essential workers. Copies of the briefs and appendices are located online at altshulerberzon.com/news.

Sign the Petition: Waive Testing This Spring

CTA IS CALLING for a waiver of state standardized testing this spring. Given widespread inequities in student access to technology and the internet, and concerns about the validity and comparability of any data gathered from statewide summative testing administered remotely and taken under unknown and uncontrollable conditions, conducting standardized testing in spring 2021 would be detrimental to students and of limited use to teachers, schools and school districts. Instead, we should be focusing on supporting students in distance learning.

Close to 19,000 educators, parents and community members have already signed the petition. There's still time to add your name — go to cta.org/our-advocacy/action-center.

Worker Protections for All School Employees

CTA IS CO-SPONSORING legislation introduced by Assembly Member Eloise Gómez Reyes (D-San Bernardino) that would provide classified school employees the same rights as certificated employees when it comes to layoff notice and hearing rights. Currently, certificated employees must receive layoff notice by March 15 for the following academic year; classified employees can be laid off any time of year with 60 days' notice. Nearly 80 percent of classified employees are women. They are the most diverse group of employees working in schools and are the lowest-paid.

"California's educators honor the services of classified school employees, who partner with us on a daily basis to provide our 6 million students with a quality public education," says CTA President E. Toby Boyd. "A student's school day begins with the first school bus ride in the morning and ends when the custodian turns off the lights at night. One of the many hard lessons of this pandemic has been acknowledging the divide that exists in our communities and also in our workplaces. That is why we are co-sponsoring this bill. We believe that in the unfortunate event layoff notices are issued, classified employees should count on professional rights that provide more stability as they strive to provide for their own families."

As of press time, the bill did not have an official number.

Bargaining Roundup

Compiled by **Julian Peeples**



EVERGREEN:

Educating about safety

Evergreen Teachers Association

in San Jose maintained active communications with members, parents and the community while continuing negotiations on the physical reopening of schools. The Evergreen School District board recently approved continuing distance learning through the end of the school year while encouraging the administration to look for ways to provide in-person support for students in need and those identified as not being engaged in distance learning.

ETA has engaged parents and the community to educate them about the district's struggles to safely reopen — including using a disinfectant not approved for COVID-19 and insufficiently staffing custodial services, which resulted in the closure of all facilities and forced remote learning.



SAN RAMON VALLEY:

Organizing to #KeepOurStudentsSafe

When district management announced its intent to manipulate state law and reopen all schools in hybrid teaching starting Jan. 5, **San Ramon Valley Education Association** in Contra Costa County launched the #KeepOurStudentsSafe campaign. SRVEA trained members on direct action to ensure safe and healthy schools, created and implemented winning messaging for the campaign, and worked with the CTA Legal Department on a legal strategy for the union's organizing plan.

SRVEA also utilized digital organizing to ensure their community understood the facts and risks. SRVEA achieved their organizing plan objectives, and the San Ramon Valley Unified school board voted to delay reopening of schools until the county is in the red tier for COVID-19 risk. The local is also negotiating contract language to ensure educators have what they need to support students during distance learning.

BARSTOW:

United against reopening

In a display of the power of solidarity, **Barstow Education Association** in San Bernardino County successfully organized against the return to in-person instruction despite Barstow Unified obtaining a waiver to resume physical classes. Even with a limited number of staff on campus to provide distance learning from their classrooms, the number of COVID-19 cases in the district was alarmingly high, and the district office was forced to close, along with both the high and middle school campuses.

WILLIAMS:

Educators organize and win

Williams Teachers Association in Colusa County started in-person learning for grades TK-3 in November and grades 4-6 in December after negotiating two agreements with Williams Unified. Grades 7-12 were expected to open in hybrid Jan. 12, but WTA members organized at two December school board meetings, pleading with board members not to reopen due to health orders and the COVID surge. Four new school board members were elected in November, and at a special meeting on Dec. 17, they voted to terminate the superintendent.



SANTA CLARA:

Hybrid learning agreement

United Teachers of Santa Clara completed negotiations with Santa Clara Unified School District for hybrid instruction. Thanks to a campaign that included comments by members at school board meetings, the bargaining team secured up to 20 special days of paid leave for teachers in case of COVID-19 illness; teacher input on the students selected to return; significant safety protections; monthly free COVID testing; and the commitment that in-person instruction will not begin until the county returns to the orange tier. The memorandum of understanding was ratified by UTSC membership and approved by the school board.



REDLANDS:

COVID agreements extended

Redlands Education Support Professionals Association (RESPA) extended all five of their COVID-19 agreements that were set to expire at the end of the year to June 30, 2021. They also secured the continued addition of five days of paid leave; additional cleaning protocols and notifications; and the provision of winter jackets and rain boots to child nutrition services workers, as requested. Redlands Unified also agreed to limiting members to working at only one location in any five-day period, unless their job requires travel to different sites (such as tech services and maintenance). Additionally, all meetings will be virtual as long as San Bernardino County is in the purple tier, except in emergencies or for cohort training.



SIERRA SANDS:

Fighting safety violations

Desert Area Teachers Association in Kern County rejected attempts by Sierra Sands Unified School District to reopen additional cohorts and filed a cease and desist order to force the district to follow safety provisions of their small cohort memorandum of understanding (MOU). When the district attempted to open additional cohorts not listed in the MOU, DATA took legal action, resulting in the district announcing it would not proceed as planned.

DATA and district officials met to discuss safety violations, resulting in the district instituting protocols for contact tracing, requiring masks for all staff and students while on campus, updating ventilation systems with the required, appropriately sized air filters, and notifying members when there is a possible COVID-19 exposure.

RIO:

A win for health and safety

Rio Teachers Association in Oxnard reached an agreement in December that provides health and safety guidelines and establishes a start date for hybrid instruction that is three weeks after the county is placed in the red tier for COVID-19 risk. The Rio School District originally planned to return all schools to hybrid instruction in late November, but the plan was scrapped, and all in-person special education instruction was moved to distance learning only when Ventura County was placed in the purple tier.

TEACHING AN INSURRECTION

Educators help students to process violent events threatening democracy

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin



“We discussed that the purpose of government is to provide order, and a quote by James Madison: ‘If men were angels, no government would be necessary.’”

—Raymond Lie, United Educators of San Francisco

A MERICA WATCHED IN disbelief on Jan. 6 as a mob of President Trump supporters descended upon the nation’s Capitol seeking to overthrow a legitimate presidential election and the will of the American people. Not since the War of 1812, when British forces set fire to the Capitol, had Washington been overrun with violent insurrectionists.

Some of those breaking into the Capitol building — where lawmakers hid in fear of their lives — were white supremacists, wearing Nazi slogans and carrying Confederate flags. Several people died during or shortly after the mayhem.

It wasn’t just adults viewing these disturbing events on live TV. Students were also watching.

For some educators it was a moment that could not be ignored. Students had questions and were looking to teachers for answers because they were bewildered, frightened and upset. Some wondered whether the events in Washington were normal, since they had no basis for comparison.

Raymond Lie, a social studies teacher at Giannini Middle School in San Francisco, says students were full of questions after lunch that day. Many shared that their phones had blown up with texts as the mob became increasingly violent.

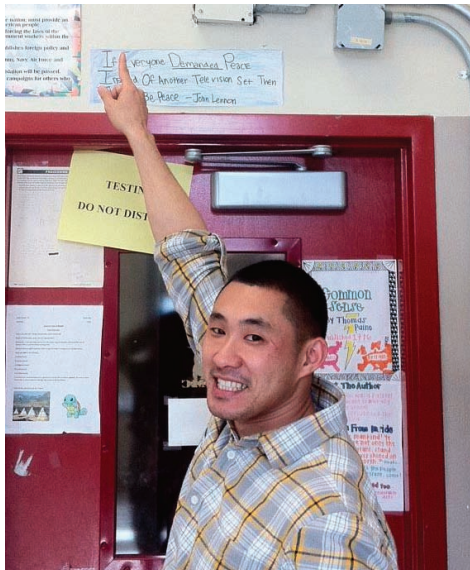
“They wanted to know why people in Washington, D.C., were freaking out,” says Lie, a member of United Educators of San

Francisco. “They wanted to know the significance of Jan. 6 and whether such events were normal during a transition of power.”

He explained that the Electoral College certification process is usually a low-key event where lawmakers confirm what voters have already decided. He shared that this year, some individuals believed President Trump’s claims that election results were falsified, despite having no proof and failing to win their argument in numerous courtrooms and even before the Supreme Court.

Lie showed students Hillary Clinton’s 2016 concession speech, so they could understand recent events in Washington were *not* normal.

“Students asked, ‘Why is Hillary Clinton telling the American people to give Donald Trump a chance to succeed? Why is she wishing him good luck?’ I explained that this is how it’s normally done, because otherwise, chaos ensues. We discussed that the purpose of government is to provide order, and a quote by James Madison: ‘If men were angels, no government would be necessary.’”



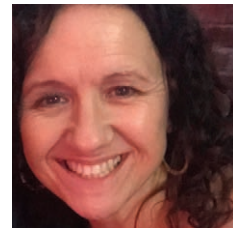
Raymond Lie points to a quote from John Lennon above his classroom door: "If everyone demanded peace instead of another television set, then there'd be peace."

“**Even my students who identify as conservatives felt what they witnessed was pretty horrific and were upset about seeing police attacked at the Capitol.**”
 —Dawn Matthews, Livermore Education Association



“From a special ed perspective, we used the event as a social-emotional learning moment. What happened in Washington offered my students a very valuable life lesson.”

—Jeni Williams, Hayward Education Association



We had a productive conversation and made it a teachable moment.”

Katie Uppman, a fifth grade teacher at Crumpton Elementary School in Marina, was pleased her district created a slide show to share with students on Jan. 7, to help them process events from the day before. It was important, says the Monterey Bay Teachers Association member, because some students were confused and fearful after watching images of the angry mob.

“The Monterey Peninsula School District deserves a shout-out because they created a beautiful slide show for teachers to use with students. It was very factual. It explained the difference between a protest and an insurrection. It explained that the Constitution and the First Amendment protects people’s right to protest and free speech, but it does not protect the right of people to be violent or prevent government from doing its job.”

It included questions for classroom discussions, asking students how they felt about what had happened and what they thought was at stake for America. The

heartfelt discussions that followed in classrooms fostered critical thinking skills in students, she says.

Kirk Taylor, teacher at San Marcos High School in Santa Barbara, says his students discussed what happened during his check-in period at the beginning of classes on Jan. 7.

“I teach math, but we talked about it because it’s a big deal,” says the Santa Barbara Teachers Association member. “I wasn’t going to teach them about democracy, freedom or truth, because I don’t feel qualified to lead a discussion like that. But I wanted to hear what they had to say. So I asked them if they had watched the news the day before and what they thought about it.”

Many of his students said they believed Black Lives Matter protesters were treated more roughly by police in protests during the summer compared to white protesters at the Capitol.

“They felt there was a great deal of hypocrisy,” says Taylor. “They expressed feelings of bewilderment and disappointment. It was nice seeing them let loose, because often on Zoom there isn’t much dialogue. For me, it was gratifying to hear them speak their minds so well.”

David Budai, a science teacher on special assignment and Coachella Valley Teachers Association member, talked with students





“Students felt there was a great deal of hypocrisy. They expressed feelings of bewilderment and disappointment. ... It was gratifying to hear them speak their minds so well.”

—Kirk Taylor, Santa Barbara Teachers Association



“We talked about people believing in ‘alternative facts’ and that when you don’t research facts, it can lead to dangerous conclusions.”

—David Budai, Coachella Valley Teachers Association

about the importance of reaching scientific conclusions based on facts.

“We talked about people believing in ‘alternative facts’ and that when you don’t research facts, it can lead to dangerous conclusions. We discussed that ‘facts are facts,’ and you don’t have to give equal time to things you know are not true. The teachable moment for students was understanding that some people *wanted* to believe in something that wasn’t factual, and then they held on to an idea and let it grow and fester until it became their reality.”

Dawn Matthews, AP U.S. history teacher at Livermore High School, tweaked a lesson from Facing History and Ourselves, an organization that uses lessons of history to challenge teachers and their students to stand up to bigotry and hate. She asked students to ponder a quote by James Baldwin: “American history is longer, larger, more various, more beautiful and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it.” She posed three questions: What did students know about what happened Jan. 6? What would they like to know? How did they feel about it?

“The biggest takeaway was that students believed a lot of misinformation had been circulating. They emphasized the importance of media literacy and accurate news sources, so that people can determine whether the information they are receiving is accurate or not,” says the Livermore Education Association member. “It was pretty clear they knew that a lot was at stake — the foundation of our democracy and the peaceful transfer of power.”

She was pleased that the discussion was unbiased and respectful of all views.



“[Our district’s slide show] explained that the Constitution and the First Amendment does not protect the right of people to be violent or prevent government from doing its job.”

—Katie Uppman, Monterey Bay Teachers Association



“Even my students who identify as conservatives and supporters of President Trump felt what they witnessed was pretty horrific and were upset about seeing police attacked at the Capitol.”

Jeni Williams’ discussion with students went in an entirely different direction, says the Hayward Education Association member who teaches students with mild to moderate disabilities at Glassbrook Elementary School.

Her sixth graders were struck by the extreme anger of those who invaded the Capitol building and said they had never seen adults behave that way. Students with special needs often have anger issues too, so she used the event as a discussion tool for how to deal with their emotions.

“We talked about what can make someone angry in general — and what kinds of things make *them* angry. Then we talked about things we can do to diffuse our anger, such as walking away, watching YouTube videos and giving yourself space.”

“From a special ed perspective, we used the event as a social-emotional learning moment,” says Williams. “What happened in Washington offered my students a very valuable life lesson.” ■

For more guidance, read “Talking to Kids About the Attack on the Capitol” at [NEAToday.org](https://www.neatoday.org).

Helping Your English Language Learners

Tips to remember when ELL students struggle

By **Meghan Laslocky**

WHEN STUDENTS WHO are learning English struggle in school, it can be especially difficult to figure out why — and how to help. There are plenty of “myths and misconceptions about services and supports” for English language learners (ELLs), writes Lydia Breiseth in an online article at *Understood*, leading schools to sometimes refer language learners for special education services when they don’t need them. It’s important to “know the facts behind these myths,” she writes, so educators can “make changes that can result in better outcomes for students.”

Start by getting to know English learners in your classroom and becoming better informed about their needs. Breiseth recommends gathering important information about them — including strengths, challenges, and background experiences — to help determine how to support them as they progress through the stages of language acquisition.

“ELLs bring unique skills, gifts and talents to the classroom,” says Breiseth, director of Colorín Colorado, a resource for teachers and families of English learners. “They often have rich background experiences, different perspectives, and the ability to navigate between multiple languages and cultures. They may also have sophisticated social-emotional skills, such as being tuned in to body language and tone of voice.”

As you get to know your English language learners, Breiseth recommends keeping the following three ideas in mind.

1. Silence is a natural and important component of language learning.

“Many students who are starting the process of learning a new language go through a nonverbal or ‘silent’ period,” Breiseth writes. The length of this interval depends on “the richness of the student’s language instruction and interaction in the classroom,” the student’s confidence level, and “whether they’re being encouraged to take risks” in the classroom.

Language learners should be gently encouraged to steadily increase their talk time each week using strategies like “turn and talk,” she advises.



“English language learners in particular benefit from ample talk time,” agrees high school ELA teacher Rosie Reid, a member of Mt. Diablo Education Association. “While it is possible to learn by listening, I’ve found that oral participation leads to greater gains in student literacy and engagement.”

Consider giving language learners questions ahead of time so they have time to prepare, and remember to speak slowly and add a few seconds after posing a question to give students time to think.

2. Students often understand you better than their language skills suggest.

Language comprehension tends to develop faster than speech, and students might fully understand directions but not yet be able to respond fluently. This can create misunderstanding and frustration between students and teachers.

Using visuals like graphic organizers can help English learners organize their thoughts and learning — and demonstrate to you that they are on the right track, even if their grasp of the language is still developing. Consider pairing pictures with important vocabulary words, or include them in assessments, or alongside printed directions to boost comprehension.

“English language learners in particular benefit from ample talk time.”

—Rosie Reid,
Mt. Diablo Education Association

3. English learners need a rich, engaging environment.

When English learners struggle, Breiseth says, there’s a tendency to look to special education for individualized support and attention — but that’s often a mistake. Instead, keep in mind that English learners need regular exposure to the “rich language environment and scaffolded support that matches their level of language proficiency.” A special education placement may cut them off from an environment in which, given enough time and targeted support, they might thrive. ■

This story originally appeared in Understood and Edutopia.



◀ Daniel Rivera putting science kits together for students' at-home experiments.

A Science Experiment: Lab Kits

Yes, kids, you can try this at home

By **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**

STUDENTS CAN'T VISIT their school's science lab during the pandemic, but the lab has come to them, thanks to science kits created by inventive biotechnology teachers for students learning at home.

In San Mateo County — biotech capital of the world, with groundbreaking companies that include Pfizer, Genentech and Gilead — nine high school biotech teachers formed a partnership with Skyline College in San Bruno, creating a dual-enrollment program allowing high school students to receive college credit for cutting-edge classes in a field that incorporates biology, chemistry, math, physics and DNA, and offers exciting, well-paying careers.

Andrea Vizenor, dean of strategic partnerships and workforce development at Skyline College, fostered the partnership with the high school teachers, connecting them with the community college's professor Nick Kapp. Before COVID-19, they collaborated to create hands-on lab experiments to teach students about biotechnology.

“The experiments are challenging enough to cover important concepts — but can be done safely.”

—**Daniel Rivera**, South San Francisco Classroom Teachers Association

When the pandemic hit, San Mateo County schools went online and the partnership ramped up. The educators didn't want to go from hands-on instruction to just lecturing. They were afraid boredom might set in, despite the fascinating subject matter. So they collaborated on curriculum via Zoom over the summer. And thanks to Skyline, which donated money and supplies, they were able to create science kits to send home with students, who are still doing distance learning.

Collaboration with college

“Skyline College was awesome,” says Daniel Rivera, a biotech teacher at El Camino High School and a South San Francisco Classroom Teachers Association (SSFCTA) member. “They bought the materials for us, and schools used these supplies to put kits together. We wanted to make sure that whatever students do at home is still meeting standards for the class — as well as CTE [career technical education] standards. The experiments are challenging enough to cover important concepts, but can be done safely.”

For example, a basic skill is learning how to mix solutions of various mass/volume concentrations and percentages. But since chemicals typically used in labs could not be sent home with students, students used Kool-Aid. They were asked to create different concentrations of the liquid with transfer pipettes, and to create flow charts that demonstrate the math scale used to calculate the strength of the concoctions.

To learn how to sort and compile data, teachers created an experiment where students weighed eggs based

BIOTECH'S BOUNTY

BIOTECH IS THE industry that created COVID-19 vaccines that will save millions of lives and get society up and running again. Biotech engineers also get credit for DNA advances that predict who is at risk for certain diseases, gene therapy to treat illnesses, evidence to solve crimes and find long-lost relatives, and cloning.



◀ Pre-COVID, educator Rocky Ng works with students.

“You can’t replace the values of labs or teachers in a classroom setting. But using our lab kits and items students can buy at the supermarket for at-home experiments is the next best thing.”

—Rocky Ng, South San Francisco Classroom Teachers Association

on size. They looked at the averages of the eggs and any kind of inconsistencies in the data, using graphs and tables to report findings in Google Docs.

Another experiment had second-year biotech students themselves design a protocol — detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to carry out an experiment — for how to propagate succulents (growing a plant from an existing plant cutting) and then figure out how certain variables could change or influence the results, charting their findings.

Kits included notebooks, clear plastic cups, batteries, eye protection, funnels, potting soil, spatulas, ultra fine Sharpies, transfer pipettes, glucose tubes, diabetic glucose test strips, glue sticks, washi tape, small scales, and various powders that are not combustible.

Building a pipeline to the biotech industry

Nine teachers and approximately 1,000 students in San Mateo County participate in this project, says Rivera, who teaches a two-year elective program. Students often make videos of themselves doing projects, explaining the process, such as extracting DNA from wheat germ out of a tube.

“It would have been boring without these labs,” says Raiselle Kyaw, a senior in Rivera’s program. “They were fun to do and helped us understand concepts like flow charts and analyzing data. I definitely plan to work in the field of science or biotech.”

“We’re learning a lot of stuff,” says classmate Elbadan Abdallah. “I’d rather do this than just study online. And it’s good because there are so many opportunities to work in the biotech industry.”

Both students enjoyed the virtual field trip to Genentech, a biotechnology company in South San Francisco dedicated to





◀ Rivera Zooms with students Raiselle Kyaw and Elbadan Abdallah.

“Students may not have been able to do fancy stuff we normally do with DNA or extracting enzymes, but they understood the processes involved from these at-home experiments.”

—Leslie Burndon, Sequoia District Teachers Association



▲ Leslie Burndon with materials she and colleagues will put into this spring's science kits.

developing medicines for people with serious and life-threatening diseases.

“It took a while to get the projects worked out, but we’ve seen some really good results,” says Leslie Burndon, a biotech teacher at Carlmont High School in Belmont and a Sequoia District Teachers Association (SDTA) member. “It was impressive seeing the kids working at home. They may not have been able to do fancy stuff we normally do with DNA and electrophoresis (the movement of charged particles in a fluid or gel

under the influence of an electric field) or extracting enzymes, but students got the rough idea and understood the processes that are involved from these at-home experiments.”

“We want to build a pipeline to the biotech industry,” says Rocky Ng, a biotech teacher at South San Francisco High School and SSFCTA member. “So, it was really important for them to have lab skills and be engaged while in distance learning. You can’t replace the values of labs or teachers in a classroom setting.

But using our lab kits and items students can buy at the supermarket for at-home experiments is the next best thing.” ■

Other CTA members in the program: Cherie Cohen, SSFCTA; Jimmy Ikeda, Mary Rustia and Katherine Ward, San Mateo Union High School District Teachers Association; and Jaime Abdilla and Tyler Kocheil, SDTA.

Books for Our Times

Teachers write books about COVID-19 to support students

By **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**

IN 2020, when truth proved stranger than fiction, two CTA members wrote books designed to help students cope with the strange new world, which includes sheltering in place, social distancing, mask wearing and online learning. These books can be used as a resource to help students cope with today's challenges — or serve as “memory books” in the future, so students can recall how they bravely lived and learned during unprecedented times.

Mask or No Mask, One Thing Is True... I Am Your Teacher and I'm Here for You!

By **Kristin Studt**

Westside Union Teachers Association member Kristin Studt, a first grade teacher at Gregg Anderson Academy in Palmdale, wanted to let her students know how much she cared about them. After the 2019-20 school year ended, she wrote a book that is beautifully illustrated by Noé Garcia, whose children attend the school.



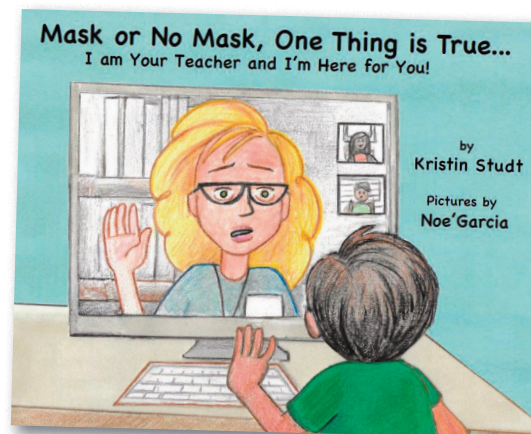
Kristin Studt

“I wanted to let my students know that we are going through strange times, and I will do my best to be their teacher and help them learn and be there for them,” says Studt, a 20-year teaching veteran.

The book depicts the heartbreak of saying goodbye last March (“I saw your sweet faces, held back a tear, because I felt in my heart things would be different for the rest of this year”) and then shows the amazing resilience

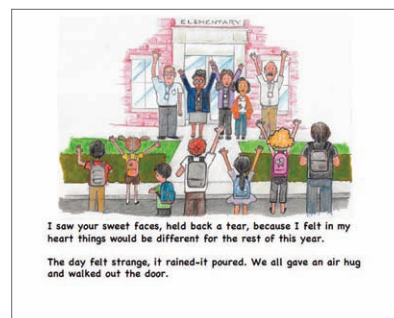
that followed (“We all heard the news, quickly shifted gears, and figured out how to do distance learning for the rest of the year”). Playground closures, drive-by birthday parties and working from home are also highlighted.

Studt and her book have been featured on KTLA television news. Holding back tears, she read the book to her new students this fall, and they loved it. The digital book is available at storiesbystudt.com.



“I wanted to let students know that we are going through strange times, and I will do my best to help them learn and be there for them.”

—Kristin Studt



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Teaching & Learning

Once Upon a Time There Was COVID-19

By **Cara Nicoletti**

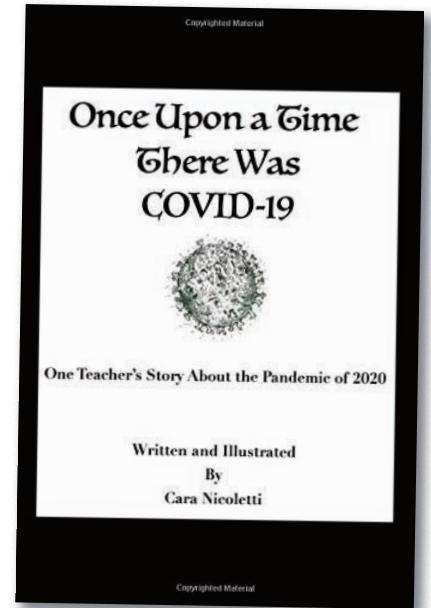
Fruitvale Teachers Association member Cara Nicoletti, a fourth grade teacher at Quailwood Elementary School in Bakersfield, wrote and illustrated this book for her students — and for posterity.

“I wanted my students to know how much they meant to me,” says Nicoletti, who has taught for 21 years. “I wanted to give them something personal they could have for the rest of their lives. We went through things together that people have never experienced before. In a way, it really is like a fairy tale, so I had fun with the title and used *Once Upon a Time*.”

Her book, published this past summer, chronicles the trials and tribulations of the pandemic, from schools shutting down to kids feeling lonely and missing their friends to the stress of working at home. But it also shows the positive side of distance learning, describing fun activities such as sidewalk chalk-drawing contests, creating videos, and making homemade butter by shaking heavy cream in mason jars.

Her book shows another silver lining: families spending more quality time together doing things like baking, playing games and creating TikTok videos.

Nicoletti and her book were featured on Bakersfield television stations. She gave each student a copy as a gift, and they loved it so much she decided to self-publish a paperback version. It is available on Amazon.



“I wanted to give them something personal they could have for the rest of their lives.”

—Cara Nicoletti



Cara Nicoletti



Photo: Northfolk / Unsplash



How Do I Set Goals When I Am in Survival Mode?

You are more than what you accomplish

By Julie Mason

SETTING GOALS FOR our professional growth is part of the job, but how do we set goals when we are teaching during a pandemic and in full-on survival mode? Will our admin be disappointed when they read “Make it through the year without quitting”? Because if we are honest, the idea of getting better at teaching (or anything) feels impossible. So instead of setting goals the way we always have, let’s try a different approach. Here’s how to set goals when you are in survival mode.

INSTEAD OF “I WILL IMPROVE,” TRY “I WILL FEEL”

I know — *what?!?* For so many of us, our achievements define our success. Our productivity defines our worth. When we think about our teaching, we look out instead of in. Here’s the thing about this profession: There is so much to learn and be and figure out and do that you could spend your entire lifetime “improving” your teaching and still feel like you have more to improve on. So let’s flip the switch. Let’s set goals for how we want to be as teachers instead of what we want to achieve.

Your goal might look like:

“I feel confident that no matter how uncertain this year is, I am making time to rest and care for myself so I can show up fully for my students (whether in person or online or both).”



INSTEAD OF WRITING SMART GOALS, TRY MAKING A LIST OF PRACTICES AND HABITS

If you swear by the SMART method, I get it. There's a lot to be said about making your goals **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ttainable, **r**elevant and **t**ime-bound. But this year, it just doesn't make sense, especially the time-bound part. There is so much out of our control. We cannot control our circumstances, but we can control how we respond to them. That's why making a list of practices or habits feels better this year.

Your goal might look like:

Teacher Goals 2021

- Sleep 7-8 hours a night
- Drink water throughout the day
- Avoid people who drain my energy
- Call a friend when I feel stressed
- Ask colleagues for help
- Relationships over rigor
- Treat myself to chocolate on the regular
- Speak up on behalf of my students and the profession

INSTEAD OF "THIS IS WHAT MY ADMIN WANTS MY GOAL TO BE," TRY "THIS IS THE GOAL THAT I CARE ABOUT"

Confession: There were years when I was up against the professional goals' deadline at my school, and I wrote down something that I knew my admin would like to see and didn't really put much thought into what I cared about. Big mistake. I ended up spending a lot of time and energy learning about new technology when I really wanted to create a new reading list for my seventh graders. So anytime I worked on my "professional growth," all I was doing was building resentment. This year we are tired and scared, and it feels like all of our nerves are on the outside of our bodies. Don't set a goal for anything unless you truly believe that it matters to you and your students. Goals still matter, even if they have nothing to do with standards or instructional models.

Your goal might look like:

"I care about helping my students discover books that they love to read, so I am going to expand my virtual classroom library and introduce my students to a variety of genres."

INSTEAD OF "THIS YEAR I WILL," TRY "AS YEARS PROGRESS, I HOPE"

This one came from Tanya, a first-year teacher who shared in the WeAreTeachers First Years! Group on Facebook. If there is anything that we need to be reminded of this year, it's that we have many years of teaching ahead of us. Because there's so much uncertainty this year, it feels right to set a goal that we care about and want to work on, while also making it clear that we are going to keep working on it throughout our teaching career. And yes, I know: How will we show we met our goal? The answer is we won't. Process over product, teacher friends.

Your goal might look like: _____

"As years progress, I hope to keep working on best practices for teaching close reading. I have a few strategies that I always use and my kids like them, but I want to dig deeper and see what else I can try."

**INSTEAD OF "I AM NOT GOOD AT X,
SO I BETTER SET A GOAL FOR X,"
TRY "I AM GOOD AT Y,
AND I WANT TO KEEP WORKING AT Y."**

We are really hard on ourselves. Too often, we focus on what we don't know or aren't good at, rather than what we love and are great at. I coach a first-year teacher who told me, "I'm bad at classroom management, so I guess we need to work on that," and my response was, "Do you want to work on that? Because if you don't want to work on something, you aren't going to." Motivation and drive are at an all-time low this year. We are so tired we can barely manage to shower, let alone become "good" at classroom management. So this year, let's set a goal to keep going with something we love or are doing well. No motivation required.

Your goal might look like: _____

“ I have built strong relationships with my students by learning more about them and what they like. I want to build on this by learning about what my students care about and the problems they want to solve.”

**INSTEAD OF ACADEMIC GOALS,
TRY SEL GOALS**

Kelly, a teacher in our WeAreTeachers Helpline Facebook group, shared: "I would recommend setting goals around building relationships and SEL [social-emotional learning]. These are supported by research and more important than ever. This way, you can focus on the whole student and their needs during this time." I couldn't agree more. Yes, our students need to learn how to identify the main idea and do long division, but this year, teaching them how to handle stress and manage their fears feels more goal-worthy.

Your goal might look like what Victoria, a teacher in our Facebook group, shared: _____

“ I will incorporate student reflections into my weekly lesson plans to promote student ownership and provide a way for students to advocate for their own needs.”

This story originally appeared in WeAreTeachers (weareteachers.com) in December 2020. ■



CTA State Council

Setting Course for the Future

By Julian Peebles

AFTER A 2020 nobody expected, CTA State Council of Education met virtually in January, readying for an influx of state and federal resources to physically reopen schools safely amid a still out-of-control COVID-19 pandemic.

Only days after the historic inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, State Council members set course for the future, unanimously reelecting CTA President E. Toby Boyd, Vice President David B. Goldberg and Secretary-Treasurer Leslie Littman to terms ending in June 2023. All three ran unopposed.

"This has been a very interesting year and a half. I never imagined this is the ride I would be on," Boyd said. "Thank you for having faith in me and my team."

After four years fighting tooth and nail to defend public schools and all students against the federal government, education

advocates and the Biden administration are already showing that public education will be a top priority for the next four years. Biden has unveiled a \$175 billion plan to provide schools and colleges the resources to physically reopen safely, stay fiscally solvent, and protect the health of educators, students and communities.

"President Biden announced additional supports for students, schools and families as states and communities struggle to address the pandemic," Boyd

said during his speech to State Council. "What a difference a few days can make!"

The potential influx of federal funds is in addition to the highest proposed funding for public education in

"Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to educate our students. We're all in this together."

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**



CTA President E. Toby Boyd, Vice President David B. Goldberg and Secretary-Treasurer Leslie Littman were unanimously reelected.

state history — almost \$86 billion in Prop. 98 school funding — as well as further resources through Gov. Gavin Newsom’s Safe Schools for All plan.

The governor’s proposal includes \$2 billion in incentive funding to encourage local school districts to physically return to classrooms as early as mid-February, an idea that has garnered harsh criticism from across the education community and elected officials.

“At a legislative hearing this week, lawmakers expressed concerns about the quick timeline in the middle of a surge, the use of incentive money when all schools need additional support, and the lack of focus on equity and supporting those students and communities that have been hit the hardest,” Boyd said. “It was pretty clear that the Legislature will have some changes.”

Boyd said CTA has not wavered in our repeated calls to reopen schools only when it is safe to do so and has remained consistent about what it will take to safely reopen.

“Safely reopening our schools means there are multiple safety layers in place: smaller class sizes for social distancing, good ventilation systems, testing and tracing programs for staff and students, transparent school safety plans, statewide accountability and enforcement, mask wearing, hand washing, and access to the vaccine. No single

“No single measure stops the spread [of COVID-19], but it’s the layer upon layer that greatly decreases the risk to our students, ourselves and others.”

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**

measure stops the spread, but it’s the layer upon layer that greatly decreases the risk to our students, ourselves and others.”

During his speech to State Council, CTA Executive Director Joe Boyd reiterated that these layered prevention measures within schools that are effectively maintained and enforced, along with an efficient vaccine roll-out for school employees, are the path forward for returning to in-person learning. He said the health and safety of all students, educators and communities must be the guiding priority for any physical reopening plan, not arbitrary dates.

“The virus is in charge right now, and it does not own a calendar,” Joe Boyd said. “We cannot just pick an artificial calendar date and expect to flip a switch on opening every school. What we can do is move forward in a deliberate way when it is safe, because we have done the hard work to get there.” ■

Taking Care of Business

WHILE THE PANDEMIC forced the meeting to take place virtually for the third time ever, State Council members completed business over the week leading up to the Jan. 23 general session.

The CTA Political Involvement Committee reported that while we came up just short on Prop. 15 in the November election, there was widespread success on Election Day — with 91 percent of CTA-recommended Assembly candidates, 82 percent of state Senate candidates, 77 percent of congressional candidates, and two-thirds of local school board candidates winning election.

Several CTA educators took on new leadership positions, winning election to the following offices:

- Maritza Avila, NEA Director, District 5
- Robert Becker, NEA Director, District 7
- Grant Schuster, NEA Director, District 9
- Nichole DeVore, NEA Director, District 12
- Kelly Villalobos, NEA Director, District 14
- Barbara Jackson, NEA Director, District 15
- Erika Zamora, NEA Director, District 16
- Wade Kyle, CTA/ABC Committee, District J
- Juli Stowers, CTA/ABC Committee, District N

All CTA conferences will be virtual this year — and free to all members. CTA State Council of Education will next meet April 9-11.

Excellence in Math and Science Teaching

CTA members are finalists for presidential STEM awards

By Gabriella Landeros

CTA IS PROUD of the six 2020 finalists from California — all CTA members — for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). The awards, administered by the National Science Foundation, are the nation's highest honors for K-12 teachers of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and computer science.

(Note: CTA recognizes STEAM and the importance of arts education, but for this article we use STEM, the official award designation.)

The awards alternate years between elementary and secondary school educators. Winners are typically announced



and honored the year following receipt of the application. For example, **BRIAN SHAY**, San Dieguito Faculty Association, was a finalist in 2019 and was announced in August 2020 as one of California's PAEMST winners.

In the most recent competition, the participants were all elementary teachers. Nominations for STEM teachers in grades 7-12 are now open and will close on March 1, 2021. Applications are now open and must be completed by April 1, 2021. For more information, visit paemst.org.



ANGELA CHAVEZ, *United Teachers Los Angeles*. Chavez has been teaching for 19 years and currently teaches third grade. She was a reviewer of state science and history-social science instructional materials, developed engineering design extensions for district K-5 teachers, and is a Girls Who Code facilitator. She also provides professional learning to colleagues on California Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), specifically on science and engineering practices. Chavez believes STEM is important for students because of the skill set they develop when they engage in experiences that promote innovation and new ways of thinking. Strong STEM instruction builds students' confidence in their ability to solve problems, and encourages them to take intellectual risks.



LESLIE WHITAKER, *Capistrano Unified Education Association*. Whitaker has been teaching for 20 years and is currently a third grade teacher. She has also supported multiple student teachers, served as a math teacher on special assignment, and worked with a team at the Orange County Department of Education to provide professional learning for TK-5 teachers. Whitaker believes STEM provides a natural intersection for curiosity and innovation. "When students can wonder, explore and experiment with ideas, they express their own creativity and get hooked on learning," she says.



MARLYS WILLIAMSON, *Chula Vista Educators*. Williamson is a fifth grade teacher in her 13th year. She has led professional learning focused on science and engineering practices, helped create Wolf Canyon's Design Den makerspace, mentored student teachers, and presented at many NGSS events. She calls science and STEM education's great equalizers: Students of all abilities, backgrounds and genders enter the science classroom at the same level and experience the same content and phenomena. Every scientist in her classroom has a voice and adds to the learning of others. "Often the most rewarding part is seeing students with an IEP or my English learner students show increased confidence and success in math and language arts, because of the communication and writing skills that they have learned in science."



ANAMARIE (MIA) BULJAN, *Hayward Education Association*. A teacher for 24 years, Buljan has been a district math coach, as well as coordinator of professional development and director of primary education for the Silicon Valley Mathematics Initiative. She believes competence in STEM areas of study creates future opportunities for students — even if they don't choose a career or degree in a STEM area. Her hopes for the future of STEM education are that all students will have quality experiences that inspire them to use what they've learned to change the world in positive ways.



KHAMPHET PEASE, *San Diego Education Association*. Pease has been teaching for 14 years and is currently a sixth grade STEM teacher. Her classes include Introduction to Coding; Gateway to Technology: Design and Modeling, Automation and Robotics; and Computer Science for Innovators and Makers. Khamphet is a champion for underrepresented girls in the STEM fields. From 2014 to 2016, she mentored 16 high school girls from schools across San Diego County to design, program and build a microlab experiment that was deployed to the International Space Station to test zero gravity.

JUDY COOK, *Lake Elsinore Teachers Association*. Cook, an educator for 28 years, is a first grade teacher. For many years, she was an induction coach and mentored teachers new to the field. She taught in summer literacy camps that provided support in science, reading and art. She also works with full-inclusion aides as they support their students. Cook believes STEM has the power to change the world one imagination at a time. To spark those ideas at an early age means students start to dream and imagine how to create new things. These ideas and the changes they bring help all of us as we venture into the future.

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

A Life in the Classroom

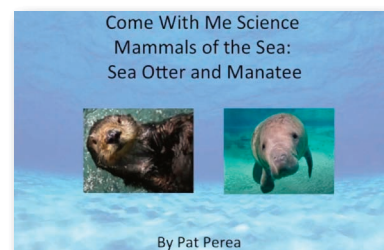
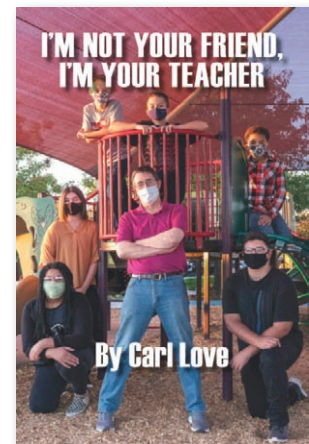
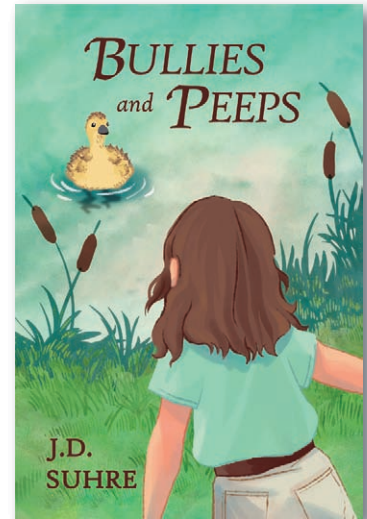
Carl Love spent 22 years as an elementary school teacher, a career he loved. The former Murrieta Educators Association member did not feel safe teaching during the pandemic, so he retired last fall and has just published a book about his time as an educator, *I'm Not Your Friend, I'm Your Teacher*. "It reflects the reality of life today in a classroom, the kids who hug you and then can't do their homework, the new ways of teaching that can be challenging and also rewarding," says Love, pictured on the cover with some of his former students. On Amazon.

Free Science Resource for Educators

Gary Eisenberg, retired Vacaville Teachers Association member, enjoyed using "Come With Me Science," a curriculum featuring illustrated cards, audio narration and songs to teach about various plants and animals, with his students in the '80s. Following the passing of creators Pat Perea and Margaret Starkey, Eisenberg assembled and updated the 17-unit curriculum, making it available on YouTube and aimed at grades TK-4. The free resource pairs original audio with photos in short videos, and offers separate videos for the songs to use for review. Check it out at bit.ly/comewithscience.

Dealing With Bullies

In *Bullies and Peeps*, Meg is a misfit at school, preferring nature to people. One day, her only friend joins a girl group led by Hannah, the most popular girl in the class. The group bullies Meg, though she finds a welcome distraction in a goose sitting on a nest of eggs in the school courtyard. No one is prepared for what happens after the eggs hatch. Written by J.D. Suhre, a third grade teacher and United Educators of San Francisco member, the book is meant for children ages 8-12. Available on Amazon.



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