

california

educator

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2021 VOLUME 26 ISSUE 1

Tools for Health & Well-Being

Ways to

Wellness



For You, Your Students and Your School Community

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One Teacher's New Hippocratic Oath

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Honesty in Education #TeachTruth

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OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

MAGAZINE

LET'S TALK ABOUT YOU

To best support students, you must feel supported as well. Here's how some educators are doing it. **PAGE 23**

A TEACHER'S NEW VOW

What I learned after a year of watching my students battle what no kids should ever have to face. **PAGE 15**

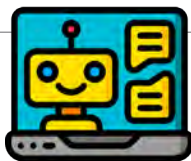
PANDEMIC PERSPECTIVES

Members reflect on personal, professional change. **PAGE 44**

WHAT YOU DID THIS SUMMER

Teaching summer school turned out to be a good way to ease kids — and teachers — back to school. **PAGE 48**

DIGITAL



CHATBOTS IN CLASS

Bots can help answer basic questions, customize individual student content, and more. **PAGE 54**

LEARNING VIA FOOTBALL

49ers EDU's standards-aligned STEAM curriculum. **PAGE 51** [49ers.com/community/49ersedu](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC49ersedu)

LIT FROM WITHIN

Horror, punctuation, etiquette! New(ish) work by our members. **PAGE 60** [cta.org/lit](https://www.cta.org/lit)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

YOUR YEAR AHEAD

Mark your calendar to take advantage of 2021-22 CTA conferences and events. Coming up: CCA's Fall Conference, Oct. 15-17, and the LGBTQ+ Issues Conference, Oct. 29-31. **PAGE 9** [cta.org/conferences](https://www.cta.org/conferences)

STEAM CENTRAL

This year's California STEAM Symposium, Oct. 21-23, offers a discount for CTA members. **PAGE 13** [steamcalifornia.org](https://www.steamcalifornia.org)

MEMBER BENEFITS

BACK-TO-SCHOOL DEALS

School supplies, tech gear: Save up to 50 percent on all you need with CTA Access to Savings. **PAGE 59** [CTAMemberBenefits.org/access](https://www.ctamemberbenefits.org/access)

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Photo: Brooke Segler, San Luis Coastal TA, welcomes her seventh graders back to school by asking them to complete the sentence "I am..." and posting responses on the classroom wall.

Back to School!



A YEAR OF *Wellness*

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FOR YOU:

Physical, mental, emotional health and well-being **PAGE 18**

FOR YOUR STUDENTS:

Movement, good counsel, social-emotional learning **PAGE 29**

FOR YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY:

Reimagining our schools **PAGE 28**

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2021-2022 Membership Manual

Back section

Photos: Clockwise from left, Jen Tsurumoto, Sebastopol Elementary Teachers Association; Jennifer Philips, Campbell Elementary Teachers Association, flanked by Lauren Ensor and Laura Henao; Deposit Photos.



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



WHAT'S UP WITH ROSIE?

Editor's note: A few members raised good points about the cover illustration on our June/July issue, which represented the "renaissance" of unions and educator activism.

I was startled to see "Rosie" represented as even whiter than the original dark-haired, dark-eyed model. Too bad the artist did not create an image of blended ethnic heritage to reflect the changing demographic of teachers in our population. And why not a more inclusive gender-ambiguous figure? This image perpetuates several anachronistic stereotypes.

ANDREA ICKES-DUNBAR
CTA/NEA-Retired

I could not help noticing that the woman does not even have her biceps contracted. She is not putting effort to go with the "We Can Do It!" title on the original Rosie illustration. Her arm looks weak. Why not have contracted biceps? Aren't women allowed to show their strength?

DEBRA MILLER OSORIO
Rancho Santiago CCD Continuing Education Faculty Association

Very disappointed in the "new" Renaissance Rosie choice. In my view, it speaks to the dominant culture. Why not look deeper? There are plenty of beautiful works of art you can borrow from that depict Black, Hispanic, Asian women. I thought as a union we were headed in another direction.

SUE ELLEN PEREZ
United Educators of San Francisco

I was crestfallen to see the juxtaposition of Rosie the Riveter with *The Birth of Venus* as a representation of a renewal of union strength. It shows a lack of understanding of the ferocity of the young immigrant girls who helped start unions in America in the early 1900s, of the pride the "Rosies" had in helping the war effort and their disappointment at being ushered back into the kitchen after the war ended, of the treatment of women as property during the Renaissance, and of where equality for women stands now.

Botticelli's idealization of a female is as a young woman with high fertile qualities. Rosie had purpose beyond childbearing — to help the war effort, financially support her family, and learn skills she never dreamed possible.

Research shows 90 percent of men and women have a bias against females today. We don't need a renaissance for unions. We need a revolution for unions and for all women.

DALIA STEPHENSON
Liberty Education Association

WHAT YOU SAID

In our June/July issue, we asked for your unsung hero and pandemic silver linings. We also asked what's on your mind right now. See responses on page 55.

KEEP MEN IN MIND ► In "Women Educators Caught in a Bind" (February/March), the 20 percent minority of male educators was disregarded. Like Erika Martinez and Stacey Strong Ortega, I have a stepson at home whose health is compromised. Like Katina Rondeau, I was teacher of the year and have two master's degrees. Not every wife, like Tracy Manscalco, earns less than her husband. I am faced with a terrible choice between family/personal health and continuing my 10-year career in adult education. It is hurtful to be discounted. Remember that men have feelings as well. 😊

RALPH MCCOY, *Pittsburg Education Association*

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MISSION STATEMENT

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

EDITORIAL INFORMATION

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

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CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2021, to Aug. 31, 2022) are \$955, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see cta.org/contribution for details). \$22.38 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives, and \$15.00 of CTA annual dues is designated for independent expenditures, totaling \$37.38 not deductible for income tax purposes. Please consult your tax adviser.

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

CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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A Safe and Successful Year



AFTER MOST OF US have been away from our school campuses for more than a year, the 2021-22 school year will start with most educators and students back at school for in-person instruction. For many of you, I'm sure the opportunity to be in the same physical space as your students and colleagues is a welcome return to normal. For others, it's still fraught with concern, and for most of us, it's a combination of both.

With the Delta COVID-19 variant spreading this summer, it will be vital that school districts adhere to safety protocols and to local CTA chapter MOUs where they remain in effect. Fortunately, school districts will have additional funding to reopen safely. The state budget Gov. Newsom signed in June has a record \$93.7 billion for K-12 and community colleges, a \$23 billion increase over last year's budget. In addition to money targeted toward COVID-19 recovery, several other programs have significant new investment, including professional development, as well as classified and administrative training programs.

Of huge significance (and as a kindergarten teacher, I'm especially excited about this) is the phase-in of universal transitional kindergarten starting in 2022-23. This tremendous step forward for early childhood education will have a long-lasting, positive impact for students and educators at all grade levels. I'm also thrilled that the budget includes \$3 billion to expand community schools in high-need areas, including those where students and communities have been hardest hit by COVID-19. Promoting the community school model, with supports for health care, child care and other community-based services, is a top CTA priority.

With such positive news on the budget front, we must be on guard against forces in play that would try to undo all that good. The recall effort launched against Gov. Newsom

is a well-funded campaign backed by those who would dismantle public education. The top-funded candidates on the ballot opposing the governor support school vouchers, stripping schools of direct funding and instead giving all parents \$14,000 to spend at any traditional public, charter or private school (California voters have soundly defeated voucher ballot measures twice in the past). One leading candidate, a radio talk show host, has said he would declare a state of emergency and fire thousands of educators. I urge all CTA members to vote no on the recall Sept. 14, and to encourage our friends and family members to do the same. Gov. Newsom has earned our support, and we must now defeat a recall movement whose goal is to destroy public education as we know it.

Finally, as we reopen schools and return to classrooms with a new infusion of desperately needed funding, I hope we all realize that "back to normal" won't work for all students. Let's take advantage of this exciting opportunity to reimagine and reshape California schools with equity at the center of every decision, ensuring that students most impacted by the pandemic and by systemic racism have the support and opportunities to achieve their full potential. CTA is part of a broad coalition intent on doing just that. You can learn more at reimaginecaschools.org.

We must all work together to make this a safe and successful year for every student. I know we're up to that challenge. I wish each of you a wonderful and successful year. CTA is here for you.

E. Toby Boyd

CTA PRESIDENT
@etobyboyd

***“Back to normal’
won’t work for all
students. Let’s take
this opportunity to
reimagine and reshape
California schools with
equity at the center of
every decision.”***



All Systems Go



TAKING A BATH and walking the dog to stave off burnout and compassion fatigue not working anymore? Not a surprise.

Educators have been told to lean into self-care the past year and a half in the face of overwhelming challenges at work and at home. But it's unrealistic to expect you to “solve” burnout and compassion fatigue by yourself through mindfulness and eating clean — though they, and other self-care practices, can be a key part of the process.

To fully heal and restore your emotional health, Canadian researchers suggest, schools and districts should set up systems and structures to help (“**Compassion Fatigue: A Systemic Concern**,” page 22). An example is the Educators Thriving program in Stockton, founded by member Tyler Hester. ET was brought in by his district; CTA gave a grant to Stockton Teachers Association to expand the program (“**SEL for You, Too**,” page 23).

“This is not professional development,” says Hester. “This is personal development.” Participants come together in a group to identify their strengths, craft goals and prioritize what is important, helping them create community and, yes, thrive.

The Pacifica School District holds restorative circles for their staff. “My biggest benefit was fostering connections and knowing I wasn't in this alone,” says member Natalie Abinante, who led the circles this past year.

This is not to dismiss individual efforts to achieve and sustain well-being. Inside our “**Ways to Wellness**” section (page 17) are tips, examples and information on getting you and your students back on track so optimal teaching and learning, and nurturing of self and others, can take place.

Don't miss other great stories about your fellow members, whose experiences during distance learning — from improving their skills and qualifications to joining the profession as first-year teachers — shape their approaches to students (“**Pandemic Perspectives**,” page 44), and the unexpected benefits of summer school (“**Summertime**,” page 48).

Thomas Courtney's experience teaching online, witnessing his students' trauma and in one case a tragedy, pushed him to rethink his objectives (“**An Educator's New Oath**,” page 15). Read his new vows, including this: “May I always remember what I saw during the pandemic, and never fail to act on my conscience, on my heart and in my head for my students' future selves.”

Though the pandemic continues, there is much to celebrate this coming year. Most of you are together again with students and colleagues; the whiteboards are clean and the markers are fresh; there's excitement and anticipation in the air. Welcome back.

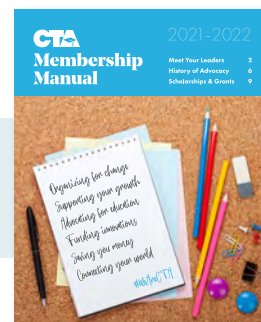
Katharine Fong

EDITOR IN CHIEF

editor@cta.org

YOUR GUIDE TO YOUR UNION

CTA's 2021-2022 Membership Manual, at the back of this magazine, has everything you need to know to make the most of your union. Check it out!



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August / September 2021

CALENDAR



Celebrate Working People

LABOR DAY this year is Monday, Sept. 6, and honors the struggles and contributions of working people. Labor unions have long fought for workers' rights; CTA has advocated for educators' and students' rights since our founding in 1863. Teach students about labor unions — find resources at pbslearningmedia.org, zinnedproject.org and learningforjustice.org.

WELCOME BACK!

THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR is always an exciting time — it's a fresh start for both educators and students, particularly after the challenges of the past year. Warm welcome to all!



◀ Maria Alejandra Hernandez, *Planeando sobre hierro y quebracho*; courtesy CultureLA.org

Hispanic Heritage Month

"Esperanza: A Celebration of Hispanic Heritage and Hope" is the 2021 theme of Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 15-Oct. 15. Mark the month with your students with activities, lesson plans and other resources found at nea.org and hispanicheritagemonth.gov/for-teachers.

There are many Latinx trailblazers students can learn about, including California Secretary of Labor Natalie Palugyai (pictured), the first Latina to hold the position, appointed in July by Gov. Gavin Newsom.



National Women's History Alliance

AUG. 26

WHILE THE 19th Amendment (1920) promised all American women the right to vote, that didn't happen for Native American women until 1924, Chinese American women until 1943, Japanese and other Asian American women until 1952, and African American women until passage of the Voting Rights Act in 1965. Talk to students about the meaning of equality and the work needed to achieve it — at all levels — for women and others in this country. Resources at seejane.org.

REGIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCES

Region I

SEPT. 9-12

Region II

SEPT. 29-OCT. 2

Do you have what it takes to be an association leader?

Learn the ropes or increase your skill set at a virtual leadership conference.

(The Region III conference scheduled for Sept. 24-26 has been canceled.) ► cta.org/conferences

Day of Peace

SEPT. 21 EVENT

"Recovering Better for an Equitable and Sustainable World." Get students involved in celebrating United Nations International Day of Peace.

► internationaldayofpeace.org/get-involved

CCA Fall Conference

OCT. 15-17 CONFERENCE

Reno, Nevada. The Community College Association's fall conference offers a variety of trainings, highlights members' accomplishments, and focuses on membership engagement.

► cca4us.org/conferences

LGBTQ+ Issues Conference

OCT. 29-31 CONFERENCE

Palm Springs. "Beyond the Binary: Identity and Imagining Possibilities." This conference is open to all CTA members and provides a venue to discuss a variety of issues affecting educators, students and the community. ► cta.org/conferences

Voluntary dues contribution

NOV. 1 OPT-OUT DEADLINE

Voluntary annual contributions by members support CTA Foundation's grants/scholarships and CTA's advocacy efforts. New members are automatically enrolled in the default contribution of \$10 for the CTA

Foundation and \$10 for advocacy. Members may change their allocation or opt out. New members have 30 days from the date of enrollment; previously enrolled members have a window from Aug. 1 to Nov. 1.

► cta.org/contribution

Fall Special Education Conference

NOV. 5-7 CONFERENCE

Location TBD. Following on the success of CTA's first-ever Special Education Conference in April/May.

► cta.org/conferences

CTA Events:

THE YEAR AHEAD

Locations are TBD except where noted.

CCA Fall Conference

OCT. 15-17, 2021

Reno, Nevada

State Council of Education

OCT. 22-24, 2021

JAN. 14-16, MARCH 25-27,

MAY 20-22, 2022

Los Angeles

LGBTQ+ Issues Conference

OCT. 29-31, 2021

Palm Springs

Fall Special Education Conference

NOV. 5-7, 2021

Student CTA Fall Event

NOV. 6-7, 2021

New Educator Weekend South

DEC. 10-12, 2021

Issues Conference

JAN. 21-23, 2022

Las Vegas, Nevada

Good Teaching Conference North

JAN. 28-30, 2022

Burlingame

CCA Winter Conference

FEB. 11-13, 2022

San Diego

New Educator Weekend North

FEB. 25-27, 2022

Read Across America

MARCH 2, 2022

CTA/NEA-Retired Issues Conference

MARCH 3-4, 2022

Equity and Human Rights Conference

MARCH 4-6, 2022

Good Teaching Conference South

MARCH 18-20, 2022

Garden Grove

Student CTA Collaborative Forum

APRIL 23-24, 2022

CCA Spring Conference

APRIL 29-MAY 1, 2022

Irvine

California Day of the Teacher

MAY 11, 2022

CTA ESP Day

MAY 17, 2022

Presidents Conference

JULY 14-17, 2022

Summer Institute

JULY 24-28, 2022

FALL INTO BOOKS

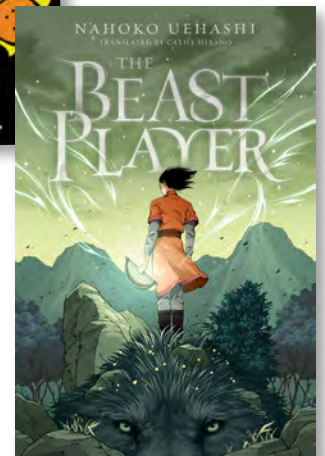
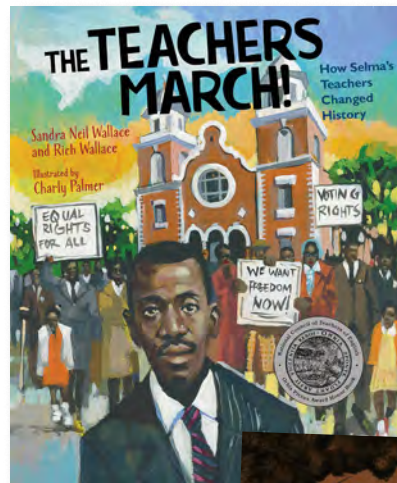
WHAT BETTER TIME to jump into reading than now? CTA's California Reads provides annual lists of teacher-vetted books that will expand young minds and make students want more. Go to www.cta.org/californiareads for the full lineup; among them:

The Teachers March! How Selma's Teachers Changed History by Sandra Neil Wallace and Rich Wallace, illustrated by Charly Palmer (grades 3-5). A timely and award-winning book, it tells the true story of Reverend F.D. Reese, a leader of the Voting Rights Movement in Selma, Alabama, and a teacher and principal. He organized a teachers-only march in January 1965 to demand their right to vote — a risky move by the teachers who left their classrooms to participate.

Hair Love, by Matthew A. Cherry and illustrated by Vashti Harrison (grades 1-2), is a tie-in to the 2020 Oscar-winning animated short by Cherry of the same title. Tender and empowering, *Hair Love* is an ode to loving your natural hair — and a celebration of daddies and daughters everywhere.

Be Who You Are, by Todd Parr (pre-K, kindergarten), reminds kids that their unique traits are what make them so special: "Be who you are! Be proud of where you're from. Be a different color. Speak your language. Wear everything you need to be you."

The Beast Player, by Nahoko Uehashi and Cathy Hirano (grades 9-12), is a young adult fantasy about Elin, a girl with a special power to communicate with magical beasts, and the warring kingdom only she can save. In addition to saving herself, she must find a way to prevent her beloved beasts from being used as tools of war.



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For our full social media directory, see cta.org/social. #OurVoiceOurUnion #WeAreCTA

NEA PRESIDENT TOURS OUR SCHOOLS ▶ NEA President **Becky Pringle** visited several community schools in California in late July, including an early education school in San Francisco and a Dream Center in Alhambra. Pringle said she was “inspired and excited by the vital work of our California educators and students.”



An important part of Pringle’s California tour was connecting. “I talked with educators and students about the challenges and opportunities of the year ahead,” she said. Above, in Oakland for Prescott School’s BBQ and garden workday.

CTA President E. Toby Boyd, Pringle and Alhambra Teachers Association (ATA) President Tammy Scorcia at Alhambra High School. The school’s Dream Center is part of the Dream Allies Network, a collaboration between ATA, UTLA, educators, students and community to transform schools into supportive spaces for undocumented, immigrant and other marginalized groups.



9/11: Teach & Learn

THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY of 9/11 will be marked by the 9/11 Memorial & Museum with “Anniversary in the Schools: 2021,” a free on-demand program Friday and Saturday, Sept. 10-11. The 30-minute program for teachers and students includes a film highlighting first-person accounts of the attacks and their aftermath, followed by an interactive live chat with museum staff

answering student questions. Teaching guides will be available in advance. ASL interpretation, captioning, and Spanish subtitles are available. Register at 911memorial.org.

New fiction and nonfiction books on 9/11 for young people are also out, including Scholastic’s *I Survived the Attacks of September 11, 2001*. The graphic novel finds a boy visiting his New York City firefighter uncle just as planes hit the World Trade Center; as events unfold, he learns what it means to be a hero. Other books feature stories on racism and xenophobia in a post-9/11 world, or use artwork and metaphor, for example, focusing on the pear tree discovered at Ground Zero that became a symbol of resilience. For more, visit publishersweekly.com and search for “portraying 9/11 for young readers.”



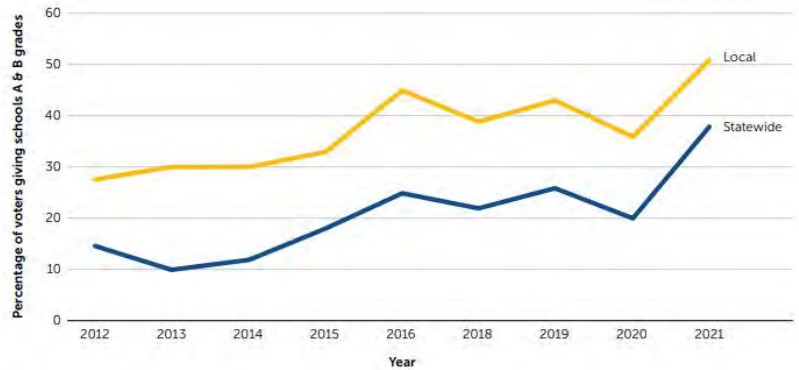
Schools, Teachers Get Top Grades

THE NINTH ANNUAL PACE/USC Rossier poll on education found that most California voters, including parents, gave the highest marks since the poll began to public schools in general and their schools in particular. This counters widespread news reports last spring showing public anger and mistrust toward schools.

A record 38 percent of voters overall and 53 percent of parents gave A or B grades to schools statewide; 51 percent of voters and 61 percent of parents gave A or B to their local public schools. Respondents, concerned about the pandemic's effects on students, said they'd strongly support measures to accelerate learning, such as intensive tutoring, summer school and hiring additional counselors.

Poll researchers surveyed 2,000 registered voters in May who are representative of California's demographics and party affiliation. For full results, go to edpolicyinca.org.

Perceptions of Public Schools



Note: Poll was not administered in 2017.

2021 PACE/USC Rossiter Poll

▼ Karamjit Kaur and Maria Luna, Redlands Education Support Professionals Association, at A.K. Smiley Public Library in Redlands.



Food to Go

EDUCATORS WERE at the ready this summer, distributing essentials to all who needed them. Some snapshots:



▶ VESPA's Kim Hunter and Angie Marin at Buena High School.



▶ Ventura Education Support Professionals Association (VESPA) member Mario Cardona points the way.

COVID-19: Staying Safe at School

AS OF PRESS TIME, guidance from the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) for K-12 schools calls for masks to be worn indoors — even among vaccinated people — in areas with “substantial” or “high” transmission rates. The guidance is aligned with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s July 27 recommendations, modified for “the California context.”

Masks: All K-12 students are required to wear masks indoors, with certain exemptions. Adults are required to wear masks when sharing indoor spaces with students. Local schools can determine how to deal with students who don’t comply; if they opt to exclude these students, they must provide “alternative educational opportunities.”

Distancing: Physical distancing in schools is not recommended. CDPH states that recent evidence shows “in-person instruction can occur safely without minimum physical distancing requirements when other mitigation strategies (e.g., masking) are implemented.”

Testing: Frequent testing for COVID-19 is encouraged. It will continue to be free under the CDPH school testing program.



Vaccination: Promoting vaccination can help schools safely return to in-person learning as well as to extracurricular activities and sports. Currently, children who are at least 12 years old are eligible for vaccines.

The guidelines also recommend regular handwashing, staying/going home when feeling sick, proper ventilation indoors, and robust cleaning/disinfecting of surfaces, as well as various quarantine protocols. For the latest, go to [cdph.ca.gov](https://www.cdph.ca.gov) and [covid19.ca.gov](https://www.covid19.ca.gov).

You can report safety violations at your school through your CTA site rep or safety rep, who will follow up to make sure unsafe situations are addressed and take it to chapter leadership if necessary. You can also file a complaint with Cal/OSHA at [dir.ca.gov/dosh/complaint.htm](https://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/complaint.htm) (any images that show students or staff should be blurred before uploading). Also, your CTA primary contact staff is available for assistance.

Get STEAMed

CTA members get an exclusive discount to attend this year’s California STEAM Symposium, Oct. 21-23, a virtual event. It includes a companion Back-to-School Pre-Conference on Sept. 1. Educators will find multiple opportunities to align and integrate STEAM into their curriculum, and connect with colleagues and community partners, interact with live speakers, and collaborate with the STEAM community. Strands include “Increase STEAM Equity,” “Embolden STEAM Communities,” “Bolster The Art and Science of Teaching,” and “Share The Joy of Learning.” Get details and register with the code JOINME21 for your discount at [steamcalifornia.org](https://www.steamcalifornia.org).



Quotes & Numbers

Compiled by Julian Peeples

57



Years teaching elementary school by Oakland Education Association member **Arvella Hayden**, who retired this year after nurturing generations of Oakland students. See story at cta.org/educator.

17,979

New teaching credentials issued in California in 2019-20. *Source: California Commission on Teacher Credentialing*

“AMERICA, WE MUST DO BETTER THAN THIS. OUR STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN ABOUT THE TIMES WHEN THIS COUNTRY HAS LIVED UP TO ITS PROMISE, AND WHEN IT HAS NOT. HONESTY. THAT’S WHAT THEY NEED FROM US. TRUTH. THAT’S WHAT THEY EXPECT.”



—NEA President **BECKY PRINGLE** in a *USA Today* column in response to passed and proposed laws in more than 25 states to prohibit teachers from speaking about race and racism.

↑ \$23.2B

Increase in state budget education funding for K-14 over last year. See page 36.



“Our children are the kite strings upon which our national ambitions are lifted aloft, and your profession helps them believe they can do anything.”

—President **JOE BIDEN**, speaking to educators at the NEA Virtual Representative Assembly.

↓ 9.5%

Decrease in enrollment at community colleges nationwide since spring 2020 — a decrease of about 476,000 students. *Source: National Student Clearinghouse Research Center*

“We are more successful now in the field of LGBT rights than we ever were, and I believe that we will continue to be so because people who discover the power of human rights cannot ever go back from that.”



—**WHITNEY WEDDELL**, Kern High School Teachers Association member, in a recent *NEA Today* story on fair play for trans girls and women in school sports.

“You speak for so many young people who may not have the power to act on their own, but they have you to lift their voices up, to make choices that can improve their lives and to share the values that can build a brighter future for each of them.”



—**STACEY ABRAMS**, speaking at the NEA Virtual Representative Assembly.

12,601

Teaching vacancies in California, as of July 6. *Source: EdJoin*



An Educator's New Oath

After a shattering year, a vow to care for the whole child By Thomas Courtney

IN MARCH OF this year, I watched as a student's beloved grandfather had a stroke — via Zoom. It was beyond frustrating to know there was so little I could do for him, and the event was not only traumatic for my student, but pretty much summed up the entire year for me as a virtual instructor.

What I saw Orion face that day, after a year of watching my students battle what no kids should ever have to face, finally woke me up.

From then on, Orion and I had a new understanding — one that felt different than the sworn oath I took when I accepted my teaching position. That oath, which was in essence to teach with fidelity and to never harm a child, felt too basic now. What I needed was a new oath, something that reminded me that the teacher I wanted to be was someone who understood my students as more than just bodies in seats taking tests.

And then I remembered that doctors have just such an oath. Their Hippocratic oath isn't just meant to prevent harm to a patient, it's to practice a profession with a code of ethics that extends beyond bureaucracy, politics and financial restraint. In fact, a modernized Hippocratic oath (pbs.org/wgbh/nova/article/hippocratic-oath-today) sounds quite pertinent to me right now.

A good doctor cares for the body — all of it.

Teachers, now more than ever, need to care for the whole child, too.

And thanks to the lesson Orion taught me that day, I've made my oath. It starts with *my* empowerment in the classroom to be the teacher who isn't tied to anything except that which empowers *my* students.

This is my teacher's Hippocratic oath:

I will respect the teaching mentors among us with experience and expertise in the field.

In the middle of No Child Left Behind, my school staff and I were once told by a principal that “until [your] students are all 100 percent proficient, none of you can consider yourselves an expert in something.” Given a list of non-negotiables, we got in and did as told. Even the most veteran of us began to work on our craft anew.

Now, I'm making my own non-negotiables. Chief among them is learning from those who have boots on the ground and skin in the game.

I will apply curriculum that is equitable, affirming and challenging. I will avoid the twin treatments of narrowing curriculum and dumbing down content.


Our staff, like inner-city schools nationwide, has long been asked to narrow our curriculum when test scores need to rise. When questioned prior to COVID, we were told: “The children will get the rest later.”

If I have learned nothing else during the pandemic, it's that school should be a place that children will miss and that they should get a full curriculum right now. School enriches children, and then students thrive and excel. The idea that achievement comes before enrichment is no longer a viable, logical or factual phrase to me.

I will remember that there is art to teaching, and that warmth, sympathy and understanding may outweigh my test score graph in the hallway despite what administrators tell me.

Putting a quality teacher in every classroom must now be the same as allowing each and every teacher to regain a sense of autonomy. This is where inspiration lies, and inspiration is what makes a quality teacher.

I will not be discouraged to say, “I know best.”

Surveys across the nation for many years reveal the reasons teachers leave inner-city schools like mine. The number one reason is the lack of respect teachers feel and the loss of input they have in decision-making. I vow to speak up, when I need to be heard, to advocate for what my students need and what their families want. 

I will remember that I am not only teaching a child in the here and now, but also a future adult whose economic livelihood depends on far more than a 5 percent rise in test scores at our school site.

I will not accept the elimination of programs that lay a foundation for the passions that make school relevant to my students in the first place. When pressed for schedules, I will remind my colleagues, staff and administration that technology, the arts, humanities, conservation science, physical exercise, and STEAM enrichment opportunities are just as important to a child's future and our collective future as a society (and even more so for marginalized students of color) as math and reading are. I will remember that equity lies in access too, not just achievement.

“I vow to never let an objective in a curriculum guide overshadow powerful life lessons that develop tolerance, compassion and self-affirmation.”

I will teach in order to prevent ignorance, racism, sexism and indifference.

I will never fail to allow these important truths and relevant histories to flourish in my classroom despite the whitewashed materials made available to me. I vow to never let an objective in a curriculum guide overshadow powerful, pertinent and affirming life lessons that develop tolerance, compassion and self-affirmation.

May I always remember what I saw during the pandemic, and never

fail to act on my conscience, on my heart and in my head for my students' future selves.

In 2020, a window opened into each child's life, and we saw again clearly that our students' achievement was no longer defined by standardized testing alone.

Thanks to Orion, I have seen through this window where my priorities lie. Coming out of this pandemic, I will carry them forward with me with my new teaching Hippocratic oath. ■

Thomas Courtney is an EdSource advisory committee member and a senior policy fellow with Teach Plus California. The San Diego Education Association member is a teacher and guide teacher at Chollas-Mead Elementary School and was named SDUSD's 2020-21 Elementary School District Teacher of the Year.

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WAYS TO Wellness

TOOLS FOR A YEAR OF HEALTH & WELL-BEING

MAKING WELLNESS an integral part of our lifestyle — particularly in the face of ongoing stress, uncertainty and challenges — is an active process, one we must choose every day. Our mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health is essential to being our best selves, leading to balance in our lives, a sense of well-being, and positive interactions with others.

You can't do it alone! Friends, family and colleagues can help, of course. For educators, formal structures and support systems at schools and among peers can be enormously beneficial. On the following pages, you'll find some of these programs described, as well as tools and tips, many from fellow educators, on how you can achieve and sustain lasting, optimal wellness.



FOR YOU

- **Back on track**
Expert tips on creating a stronger, healthier you [PAGE 18](#)
- **Compassion fatigue**
Setting up a structure, systems to help individuals [PAGE 22](#)
- **SEL for you, too**
Social-emotional learning for educators [PAGE 23](#)

FOR YOUR STUDENTS

- **Movement matters**
PE teachers' plans to get students into tip-top shape [PAGE 29](#)
- **Conditions to thrive**
School counselors, educators on easing kids back into routine [PAGE 33](#)

FOR YOUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

- **Reimagining schools** with equity at the center [PAGE 28](#)

BACK TO
SCHOOL

BACK ON TRACK

Tips from experts
on creating
a stronger,
healthier you

By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin



COVID-19 IS A VIRUS, but the numeral also represents the number of pounds many people gained while staying home. A survey by the American Psychological Association found that 42 percent of U.S. adults said they had gained too much weight in the pandemic.

While working remotely from home, many individuals were sedentary most of the day and unable to social-distance themselves from the refrigerator. The report found an increase in binge eating and takeout meals. Stress levels and mental health crises were also sky-high.

As we emerge from what we hope is the worst of the pandemic, now is the ideal time to make positive changes and improve your physical and mental health. We asked faculty who teach adults physical fitness, nutrition and health science at community colleges for tips to get you back to health as the school year begins.



ERIC ABRAMS

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF KINESIOLOGY
AT SAN BERNARDINO VALLEY COLLEGE
San Bernardino CCD Teachers Association

• **START SLOWLY TO GET BACK TO WHERE YOU WERE BEFORE THE PANDEMIC** in terms of activity. Build from there by adding more challenging activities and increasing the number of minutes you exercise daily, the miles you walk per week, or the number of days per week that you exercise. Make these subtle changes every few weeks to avoid increasing too quickly and doing too much too soon. Connect with like-minded people who have the same goals and get involved in a walking or exercise group. Turn off the TV.

• **BE CAPABLE, CONFIDENT AND CONNECTED.** Do things you feel capable of doing, and you become more confident in your ability. Enjoy things you feel connected to. Instead of walking on a treadmill, which is boring, go for a walk along a stream. Walk with your pets and your family. Go for a bike ride. Enjoy the scenery and diversify your activities.

• **GO OUTSIDE AT RECESS** and be active with students. Jump rope with them and get them moving too so they aren't just standing around. Instead of rolling out the ball, play ball with them. Your students will love it, and you'll get exercise, too.



▲ Abrams enjoys the great outdoors.

▼ Estrada, with her family, suggests doing the things that make you happy.



LINDSAY ESTRADA

ADJUNCT PROFESSOR OF HEALTH SCIENCE AND NUTRITION AT RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE AND MT. SAN JACINTO COLLEGE
Riverside CCD Faculty Association

• **GET AT LEAST 7 TO 8 HOURS OF SLEEP** to help your body handle the stress of daily life. A lack of boundaries between work and home life from working remotely reduced sleep in the pandemic, and healthy sleep is necessary to good health. Research shows that blue light from our tech devices slows down the body's production of melatonin, which is necessary for sleep. Don't use your computer or phone before bedtime.

• **MANAGE YOUR STRESS.** Don't worry about the things you can't change, and if you can change things that you worry about, change them. Stress results in poor sleep, poor dietary choices and poor health. Don't dwell on the past or worry about the future. Be in the present.

• **DON'T COMMIT TO THINGS YOU DON'T HAVE TIME FOR.** Learn to say no to things you don't want to do without feeling guilty. In our society, people feel that if they are not constantly busy, they are not doing enough. Take time to relax and do things that make you happy. Socialize and connect with other people.



• **MAKE GOOD DIETARY CHOICES** but don't stress about them. We have a diet culture where everyone thinks they have to eat a certain way, and they end up binge eating or making poor choices and then stressing about it and overeating even more. Try for a healthy, colorful diet, limit processed foods, but don't feel guilty if you enjoy a pizza on Friday night. Drink plenty of water and stay hydrated. →

PATIENCE OLAJIDE

ASSOCIATE FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCE AND HEALTH CARE AT RIVERSIDE CITY COLLEGE;
 ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HEALTH, HUMAN AND PUBLIC SERVICES,
 CLARK STATE COLLEGE, SPRINGFIELD, OHIO
Riverside CCD Faculty Association

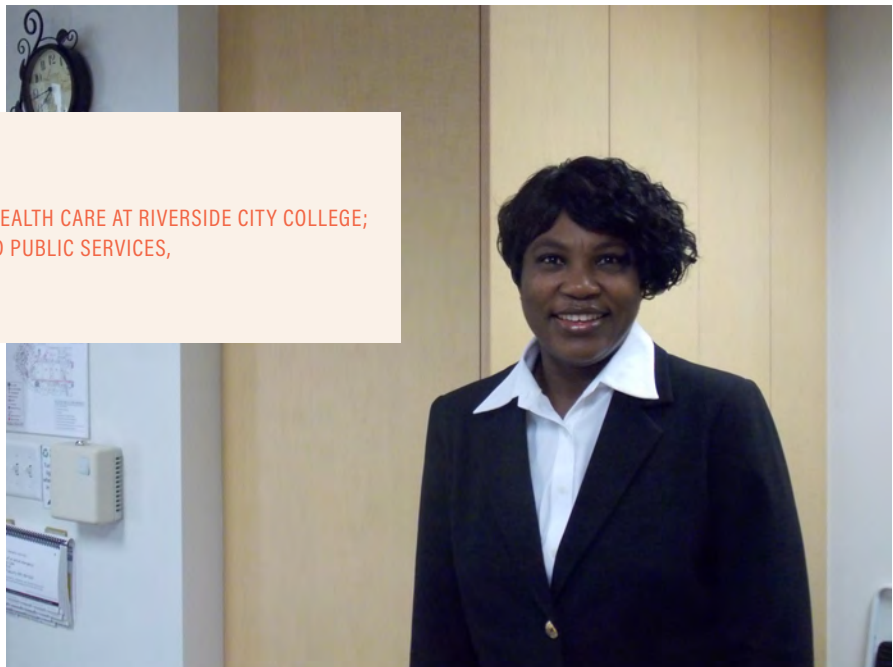
- **MAINTAIN HEALTHY HABITS.**

Habits that kept us healthy are worth keeping. The habits we practiced during the pandemic will prevent us from getting not just COVID, but other infections, too. Just because we are vaccinated doesn't mean we should stop washing our hands really well, using hand sanitizer, and respecting each other's personal space by keeping a bit of distance.

- **SEE YOUR DOCTOR.** Many of us have put off visits to the doctor in the pandemic. Have a checkup and make sure your heart, blood pressure, cholesterol and overall health is good.

- **TAKE CARE OF YOUR MENTAL HEALTH.** If you are having trouble returning to work and the life you once enjoyed, find a support network or mental health professional. Find a forum where you can exchange ideas on how to ease back into work and society. Educators must take care of our own mental health so that we can be supportive of our students and convey our passion for what we are teaching.

- **GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO READJUST TO LIFE.** The trauma of the pandemic has instilled fears in many people, and everyone has to ease back into things at their own pace and comfort level. People need time to deal with their trauma and fears — especially if they lost loved ones or became ill. Many have post-traumatic stress disorder from their experiences during the pandemic.



BECKY BLACK

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS
 AT LONG BEACH CITY COLLEGE
Long Beach City College Faculty Association

- **SHIFT AWAY FROM STRESS EATING.**

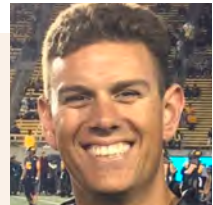
In the pandemic, many consumed foods to manage their emotions and soothe themselves, which often resulted in poor food choices. People ate when stressed instead of when hungry. They ordered fast food due to fear of going into grocery stores. Eating for comfort was a way of coping with trauma in unprecedented times. Don't beat yourself up over this. Instead, stop the addiction to food by reducing your intake of sugar, salt and fat.





DANIEL DIAZ-ROMERO

INSTRUCTOR OF KINESIOLOGY AT SIERRA COLLEGE
Sierra College Faculty Association



- **FIND EXERCISE THAT YOU ENJOY.** Whether it's lifting weights, tennis, swimming, surfing, walking, bike riding or going to the gym, find things you enjoy that will give you a good cardio workout. Don't be intimidated going to the gym or worrying about how your body looks. Try new things.
- **SET SMART GOALS.** It stands for: Specific; Measurable (so you can accurately track your progress); Attainable (which means realistic); Relevant (so it will have a direct benefit); and Timebound (by setting a timeline to keep you on track).
- **THINK OF GOOD HEALTH AS A LIFESTYLE.** Setting short-term goals is important, but the ultimate goal is to create a healthy lifestyle that will improve your mental health, sharpen your brain's ability to respond to stimulus, boost your energy levels, provide an overall sense of well-being, and help you to live longer. There is never a better time to start than right now.

▲ Diaz-Romero practicing what he preaches at a Spartan Race.

► Black buys whole-food, plant-based groceries.

- **EMBRACE A WHOLE-FOOD, PLANT-BASED DIET.** Eat less dairy (including cheese) and less meat (beef, chicken, pork, fish). Buy more vegetables — starchy and green leafy, fruits (not juice), beans, nuts, and seeds. Eat whole foods that are not processed or minimally processed. If your body craves junk food, it's because it's accustomed to a certain level of sugar, salt and fat and gets cranky when deprived. It can take up to a month for your taste buds to readjust to a healthier way of eating.

- **GET LOTS OF VITAMIN D.** Before covering up with a hat, sunscreen and sunglasses when going outside, spend a few minutes in the sun. Let your body soak it up and in return make vitamin D.

- **CHOOSE WHOLE INSTEAD OF PROCESSED.** Buy whole grains: brown rice, steel-cut oats, corn and quinoa, and reduce your intake of processed grains including bread and noodles. Whole grains have more fiber, which fills us up and is the only way cholesterol can leave our body.





Stephen Smith

STEPHEN SMITH

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF KINESIOLOGY
AT RIO HONDO COLLEGE
*Rio Hondo College Faculty
Association*

- **START MOVING.** During your prep period, walk around the track. Or march in place. Don't always park at the closest parking spot; park further away and walk. Take the stairs. The smallest things make a difference from a physical standpoint. Track your steps. Technology can easily tell us how many steps we take.
- **TAKE A BREAK FROM SOCIAL MEDIA.** Stop reading all the negative stuff where people are fighting, arguing and trying to incite other people to get upset. Our first instinct is to look at our Facebook or Twitter feed every free second. There are great things about social media, such as staying in touch with family or friends. But we need to cut the negativity that comes with it.
- **ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING.** We couldn't control the pandemic, but we could control our reaction to it. Taking it a step further: We can't control what our principal does and how parents behave, but we can control how we respond to these things and not dwell on them. As a middle school and high school teacher in a former life, I would constantly remind myself that parents who were complaining just care about their kids, and I would try not take it personally.

COMPASSION FATIGUE: A SYSTEMIC CONCERN

To heal, educators need help from school, district community

TAKING A BATH and walking the dog not helping with your feelings of burnout and compassion fatigue? You're not alone.

A large-scale survey of educational workers in Alberta, Canada, conducted over the past year and a half found that many respondents were relying too heavily on self-care personal routines when faced with difficult and challenging workplace problems.

Researchers instead suggested that system-wide interventions, such as administrators and policymakers helping reduce educators' daily workloads, increasing supports for inclusive classrooms and allowing educators to take a break during the school day, are needed.

The survey found that compassion fatigue was impacting the emotional health of 53 percent of respondents and that 80 percent were experiencing two or more symptoms of burnout. In a recent *Education Week* column Shayla Ewing, a high school English teacher in Illinois, says that this indicates "a silent epidemic in education: educators with nothing left to give."

To truly address the healing process, Ewing says, educators and administrators can start by reframing the conversation. Her advice (abridged):

1. Don't use language detours.

Calls for educators to be "resilient" can be harmful, making staff feel like they should be able to sustain unmanageable workloads or brush off signs of burnout. And pain-hierarchy language like "They need me more" or "Do it for the kids" enforces unhealthy martyr mindsets. Calling out and correcting these and other language detours can help educators better uncover symptoms of compassion fatigue and set healthy parameters for defining their own success.

2. Celebrate teacher well-being.

Teachers are frequently celebrated for achievements resulting from toxic work habits. Leaders who exclusively recognize educators who work endless hours set the expectation that this is a prerequisite for success. Educators who are already emotionally depleted feel like "bad teachers" when they fail to meet this expectation. Why not publicly acknowledge teachers who practice mindfulness, educate themselves about appropriate self-care, and invest in their own well-being outside of school?

3. Normalize language around compassion fatigue and healing.

Teachers are expected to be positive people, but this expectation can be harmful. When teachers express their struggles, they may be met with "Look on the bright side" or "Don't be so negative." Meeting mental health concerns with toxic positivity gaslights educators, making them believe that their compassion fatigue can be cured by thinking positive thoughts. Instead, schools should help teachers identify and monitor symptoms, report concerns and seek help.

If compassion fatigue is not addressed, it can manifest in more serious mental and physical health issues. School and district leaders have a responsibility to establish an environment that not only allows educators to heal but encourages it.



▲ From the video "Focus on Adult SEL" at PBS Learning Media's resources for California educators ([pbslearningmedia.org](https://www.pbslearningmedia.org)).

SEL *for You, Too*

Educators need social-emotional learning as well as their students By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin

AS A TEACHER, you constantly check in on your students to see how they are. You're always there to support them, and if they're struggling you help find assistance for them. It's all part of social-emotional learning (SEL).

But you need SEL, too. New research from the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) shows that teachers are more anxious and overwhelmed since the pandemic and in need of SEL more than ever.

For you to best support students, you must feel supported as well. And not just by individuals, but within a structured system that permeates a school's culture.

We found a few CTA members who have benefited from such a system. These positive school environments that offer SEL for staff might inspire other districts to formalize programs where educators feel valued, cared about and supported.

STOCKTON:

Educators thriving

"**WE ARE NOT** here to learn how to teach like a champion, check for understanding, monitor students' progress or learn new pedagogical skills. We are here for our well-being and to build connections with each other. This is not professional development. It's personal development," Tyler Hester tells his class.

Welcome to an introductory session of Educators Thriving (ET), a unique program in Stockton that has become a support network for educators in this Central Valley community.

It started in 2019 when the district brought in Hester, then a Harvard doctoral student, to share his research-based personal development program to support early-career teachers. The Stockton Teachers Association (STA) received a grant from CTA to make the program free and expand it to include veteran teachers.

Hester had surveyed educators and his program addressed the five "pitfalls" that were leading them to burnout: feeling overwhelmed, personal neglect, unexpected challenges, isolation, and having a fixed mindset.

In 2020, Hester became a creative writing and leadership teacher at Chavez High School and an STA member. Then the coronavirus hit. What started as a teacher support program during normal times became a lifeline for STA members coping with stress and anxiety in unprecedented times.

"Unlike most programs, it focuses on the educator," says Delores Hastings, a third grade teacher at Marshall Elementary School. "It



“We are here for our well-being and to build connections with each other. This is not professional development. It’s personal development.”

—TYLER HESTER, *Stockton Teachers Association and founder of Educators Thriving*

helps us with our vision, reminds us of our core values, and helps us prioritize. It helps us be better educators because it helps us as human beings.”

Educators attend online sessions about identifying and using their strengths, crafting goals, reflecting and integrating core values, practicing mindfulness, and prioritizing what is important. They attend asynchronous lessons narrated by Hester but are joined in real time by a small group of colleagues and STA “fellows” who facilitate discussions. Between sessions, they apply strategies to improve well-being and reflect on their actions. They receive continuing education credits, too.

So far, 84 percent of ET participants report the program has made them feel teaching is “more sustainable.” Teacher retention has increased; 97 percent of teachers in the program returned, compared with 90 percent of another group.

“We’ve had amazing feedback from our members,” says Felice Bryson-Perez, president of STA and a teacher at Taft Montessori School.

Roxanna Ayala, a teacher at Taft, embraced mindfulness to help deal with the stress of losing a loved one to COVID-19 and getting a pink slip, which was rescinded. “It’s a very powerful tool and helps me keep my sanity and stay



Stockton Teachers Association members clockwise from top left: Felice Bryson-Perez, Tyler Hester, Delores Hastings, Roxanna Ayala, Carolyn Snyder, Lindsay Kent.

grounded every day.”

ET began as a collaboration between Hester and the Boston Teachers Union, where it is still available. It is also offered to Kern County educators through the county department of education.

His inspiration for the program goes back to his first year as a teacher in another California district in 2008. While having breakfast with his mother at an IHOP, she asked, “How are you?” Hester ended up crying into his pancakes. Moments like that strengthened his conviction to focus on the wellness of educators.

Hester reminds participants that wellness is a journey and not

a destination, and that he is continuing to try research-based strategies for his own well-being. The program is not therapy; the goal is helping educators thrive and creating community.

He comments that 20 years ago, very few people were providing SEL supports for students, and today SEL is a critical component of all instruction.

“I’m hoping that 20 years from now, it will be commonplace for educators, too.”

CTA chapters interested in Educators Thriving can contact Tyler Hester at Tyler@educatorsthiving.org.

PACIFICA:

Restorative circles

EDUCATORS USE restorative circles in their classrooms to develop relationships, build communities, and respond to conflicts and problems — where all students have an equal opportunity to speak and be listened to.

In the Pacifica School District this past year, online, voluntary restorative circles were held every other week to help employees process the many challenges of a difficult time.

“The idea sprang from a return-to-school planning session [in summer 2020] when we discussed how important it was to support our staff as well



Debby Lyttle

as students,” says Natalie Abinante, a special education teacher who is vice president of Laguna Salada Education Association (LSEA).

In addition to the circles, all staff have access to SEL-related resources for themselves and for students through Google Classroom. They proved extremely helpful for those grieving the death of a beloved staff member.

“The circles put my mind at ease and put me in a better place,” says LSEA member Debby Lyttle, a fifth grade teacher at Sunset Ridge Elementary School. “We discovered we were experiencing the same things early last year: depression because we weren’t with the kids in person; isolation from being at home; and anxiety because

the unknown was scary. I also felt joy seeing my colleagues in a setting that wasn't a staff meeting."

The circles include classified employees and administrators such as Julie Carrillo, director of special education and student services for the district.

"We decided that we need to focus on the mental health of students — but we needed to put on our own oxygen masks first," says Carrillo.

"The circles provide a safe space for that. It isn't therapy and it isn't a dumping ground. It is staff reaching out to other staff to provide camaraderie and support."



Natalie Abinante

Participants are encouraged to speak from the heart, listen to one voice at a time, be solution-oriented, and not take things personally. They share what makes them stronger or feel better.

"My biggest benefit was fostering connections and knowing I wasn't in this alone," says Abinante, who has a master's in restorative practices and led the circles. "It gave people a chance to process what was happening, and in some instances, it provided us the strength to continue."

The circles paused for the summer but will resume online this fall.



REGULAR EXERCISE

"It gave people a chance to process what was happening, and in some instances, it provided us the strength to continue."

—NATALIE ABINANTE, vice president, Laguna Salada Education Association

RIVERDALE:

Shedding weight (and isolation)

THIS SPRING, members of the Riverdale Teachers Association sponsored a "Pandemic Pound Loss Challenge." President Doug Childress observes that colleagues had put on extra pounds from inactivity during the pandemic.

But it wasn't just about the weight, says Childress, a fifth grade teacher at Riverdale Elementary School. "The depression that comes with weight gain, as well as feelings of isolation in the new socially distanced workplace, was taking a toll."

Teachers in the district's three schools formed teams consisting of teachers, administrators, classified employees and school board members to see which team could lose the most weight, as in the TV show *The Biggest Loser*, over an eight-week period.

Employees went power-walking together and shared



◀ Doug Childress walks off the weight.

weight loss ideas. They held video chats and created motivational videos. (They occasionally "sabotaged" other teams by supplying them with free doughnuts.) Through such collaboration, healthy habits increased and isolation decreased. Connections between administrators, certificated and classified staff and school board members were strengthened.

You might even say the participants became The Biggest Winners.

"At the end of eight weeks, 76 employees had lost over 550 pounds, and everyone had a great time," says Childress. He lost 47 pounds and was the winner — but recused himself since he was overseeing the competition and holding confidential weigh-ins. Thanks to his weight loss, he was able to zipline on his summer vacation.

Cameron Mendez, choir teacher at Riverdale elementary and high schools, was the official winner, having lost 26 pounds. "This was exactly what we all needed to get ourselves on track, not only mentally but socially,"



Biggest winner Cameron Mendez ▶

“[The Pandemic Pound Loss Challenge] was exactly what we all needed to get ourselves on track, not only mentally but socially.”

—CAMERON MENDEZ, *Riverdale Teachers Association*



he says. “We all needed something to buy into, and this competition boosted spirits with camaraderie and friendly rivalry along the way.”

Winning teams received gift cards, and contestants from all teams were treated to a free lunch from a “healthy options” food truck.

For some, the changes were life-altering.

“I started taking care of myself,” says Jacqie Lopez, a first grade teacher at Fipps Primary School who lost 24 pounds. “I had put on weight during the pandemic from sitting 55 to 60 hours per week in front of my computer and not eating well. I have started walking with a fellow teacher every day at lunch, and it’s been a great stress reliever.”

Jessica Reyes, a chemistry teacher at Riverdale High, took up running every day and lost 12 pounds. “It became easier to deal with teenagers, Zoom issues I was having, and whatever else went wrong. I felt mentally prepared for anything.”

Childress may repeat the competition once the pandemic is over.

“I don’t want this to be a one-time thing and then forgotten. People made big changes toward a healthier lifestyle, and I’d like that to continue.”



▲ Jacqie Lopez and Jessica Reyes on the move.

SIGN UP, TAKE PART, LEARN MORE

Join **CTA’s Mental Health Mondays Sept. 13, Oct. 11 and Nov. 15** to take on self-care and stress management, compassion fatigue and healthy and adaptive coping. For details and to register go to these calendar dates at cta.org/events.

NEA is offering virtual SEL blended learning courses in self-awareness, relationship skills, social awareness, self-management, and responsible decision-making. Register by Sept. 10 for the fall session Sept. 20-Oct. 29 at nea.org/social-emotional-learning-sel-courses.

WestEd’s “SEL for Educators” toolkit for individuals and groups examines five high-leverage practices to support social-emotional development and well-being; selcenter.wested.org/resource/sel-for-educators-toolkit/#.



◀ Fifth grade teachers Lauren Ensor and Jennifer Phillips with the latter's student teacher Laura Henao. "We were super supportive of each other, and I adore them!" says Phillips.



Jennifer Phillips

CAMPBELL:

Feeling love and community

JENNIFER PHILLIPS enjoyed support from her school community at a time when she desperately needed it.

"Campbell School of Innovation did an amazing job supporting teachers during these very trying times," says the Campbell Elementary Teachers Association member. "The Parent Teacher Organization is phenomenal. From time to time, encouraging notes were placed in my box with heartfelt words of appreciation that were specific to me, not rubber stamps. Parents sent encouraging words of appreciation and gifts, and took turns providing lunch, Starbucks cards and classroom donations. The district held monthly raffles for wellness baskets, encouraging us to share our own stories of self-care."

The support made all the difference, says the fifth grade teacher.

"There were many times that prepping for the next day went late into the night, and it was really touching to receive genuine appreciation from parents, colleagues and district personnel, acknowledging how hard we were working. It made me feel that even though times were extremely tough, I could go on."

During online learning, a parent expressed appreciation and asked if there was anything needed to make the job easier. When Phillips mentioned that her chair was uncomfortable, the parent, to her amazement, sent a comfy chair to her house as a gift. She was very touched.

"For me it's not just about the gifts; it's about the thoughtfulness and appreciation of the hard work teachers are doing," says Phillips. "Teacher SEL is just as important as student SEL. You can't be there for others if no one is there for you."

"Teacher SEL is just as important as student SEL. You can't be there for others if no one is there for you."

—JENNIFER PHILLIPS, *Campbell Elementary Teachers Association*



LET'S REIMAGINE CALIFORNIA'S SCHOOLS

Coalition proposes restarting and rebuilding schools with equity at the center

THE PANDEMIC and our nation's reckoning on racial justice further exposed systemic inequities in our education system. The impact has been particularly devastating on students of color, students from low-income families, English learners, youth in foster care, students experiencing housing insecurity, students with disabilities, and other marginalized children and youth. Educators also experienced greater stress and burnout.

The pandemic altered our understanding of how schools could and should operate as well. Now, as we return for a new school year and districts are poised to receive a major infusion of federal and state funding, we have an opportunity to make real change.

We know we can't go back to "normal" because the pre-pandemic normal was not working for all students. Instead, we should build toward an education system that places equity at the center so that *all* students have the support and opportunities they need to achieve their potential.

CTA has joined a coalition of education and community groups that is reimagining California schools and districts with this goal. The whole-student approach includes centering relationships, strengthening educators, advancing a robust curriculum and empowering school teams.



Rebuilding and recovery must begin by nurturing students' and educators' social and emotional well-being to support academic progress. But it should go farther by reimagining the very systems in which students learn. This includes strengthening the foundation of our education system and all child- and family-facing systems to eradicate systemic racial and other inequities; to build trust between and among students, families, educators, administrators and leaders; and to strengthen systems for continuous improvement.

Long-term systemic transformation can happen when our schools are restorative places — where students feel safe, known, supported and fully engaged in learning.

A big idea proposed by the coalition is a bold move districts can make in the coming months:

A Restorative Restart

Every California district should take six weeks to offer students, families and educators a restorative restart. During this time, district and school leaders and staff should prioritize the five practices listed below and then continue to expand them year-round.

- Center Relationships
- Address Whole Child Needs
- Strengthen Staffing & Partnerships
- Make Teaching & Learning Relevant & Rigorous
- Empower Teams to Reimagine & Rebuild Systems

Read more at reimaginecaschools.org.

CTA'S WELLNESS CENTER Trauma associated with events of the past year and half runs deep. CTA has created a hub for your well-being and mental health — as an individual and in schools and classrooms. Check out cta.org/wellnesscenter for resources and tips, including links to our Mindful Mondays series.



Sarah Bowers leads a yoga class, which has helped students cope with pandemic stress.



“I wanted to humanize [PE] and let students know that whatever they are feeling — including isolation and frustration — is OK.”

—Sarah Bowers,
Ukiah Teachers Association

Ready, Set, Resume!

PE teachers have game plan for restoring students to fitness

By **Sherry Posnick-Goodwin**

PE teachers are ready to whip students into shape this fall, and it's not going to be easy. After 18 months of reduced activity, the challenge is real.

During the pandemic, many students became couch potatoes, sitting in front of screens instead of enjoying sports, outdoor activities or recess. California waived the minimum PE requirements (see sidebar, page 31), although many schools offered virtual instruction. Teachers say some students participated but many did not, resulting in weight gain.

“Overall, we've seen excessive weight gain during the pandemic,” says Dr. Elizabeth Shepard, medical director of the pediatric weight clinic at Stanford Children's Health Center. Pre-pandemic, children in California had a higher rate of obesity compared to children in other states, and that is likely to rise when new data is collected.

Rebuilding students' strength, endurance and energy won't

happen overnight, but educators are working on their game plan for returning students to better health.

“When the pandemic hit, it was an adjustment for all teachers,” observes Sarah Bowers, a PE teacher at Ukiah High School. “Putting a physical education teacher in front of a computer screen was especially challenging. But PE teachers have worked hard to keep kids active and moving during the pandemic. And we are looking forward to getting them even more active in the new school year.”



Sarah Bowers

A tough virtual workout

PE was among the most challenging classes to teach in a pandemic. Some schools continued to keep PE online — even when in-person learning resumed — because exertion and contact sports can spread droplets.

Trent Suzuki made a big effort to create a “culture of





Above, Trent Suzuki's PE class on Zoom.

At right, Washington's students.



PE” where students could bond with each other virtually and keep moving. He estimates 65 percent of students attended online classes last year. They jumped rope, juggled, and did kick boxing and cardio drumming from home, using water bottles and cans for weight lifting.

“I had to think outside the box,” says the Escondido Elementary Educators Association member, who teaches at multiple schools. “There was camaraderie and teamwork. We made no excuses and talked about how we were all in this together — and going to stay strong together. It probably helped that I never told them that they weren’t being graded in the pandemic.”

Suzuki, who was named Elementary Physical Education Teacher of the Year in 2020 by the California Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, plans to go slower than usual when he resumes in-person instruction this fall.

“For the 35 percent of students who are not in condition, we will start moderately and build up gradually. We may start with one sit-up and one squat, and then add more each day. Instead of running an entire lap, we may walk for part of it. We will work our way back to fitness one step at a time.”



Trent Suzuki

For Brittany Washington, teaching dance online was tough. “I’m not going to lie, it was a challenge,” says the Lynwood High School teacher, who is also a cheer coach at her school and a Los Angeles Rams cheerleader who performed at the Super Bowl in 2019. “Some of my students wanted to dance, and others wanted to stay in bed all day. The pandemic made some kids really lazy. The most difficult thing was trying to push students so they wanted to engage.”

The Lynwood Teachers Association member turned her living room into a dance studio with rollaway mirrors and encouraged students to enjoy moving to jazz and hip hop while expressing their pent-up emotions. They told her it made them feel better.

“We talked about dance as a stress

“I’m not going to lie, it was a challenge. Some of my students wanted to dance and others wanted to stay in bed all day.”

—Brittany Washington,
Lynwood Teachers Association

reliever and a means of self-expression. Even though we stayed in distance learning throughout last year, we came together to film a spring concert.”

Jen Tsurumoto created high-energy videos on her YouTube channel for her fourth graders at Parkside Elementary School, and taught fifth and sixth graders at Brook Haven School in Sebastopol on Zoom in real time. It was a tremendous challenge as a first-year teacher.

“Other than my PE classes, students weren’t getting much exercise,” says the Sebastopol Elementary Teachers Association member. “I tried to make it as fun as possible. I needed them to turn their cameras on for safety. Eventually, all the kids had their cameras on. Even if I just saw the top of a head or an arm moving around, I knew they were safe and participating.”

Transitioning back to in-person

When Tsurumoto’s students returned last



Jen Tsurumoto, left, created videos for students as well as holding class on Zoom.



Betsy Erickson



Erickson at work in the gym.

April, moving around and staying socially distant was possible through activities such as disc golf (a combination of Frisbee and golf), running and pickle ball.

“We played a lot of games like Sharks and Minnows with pool noodles that keep them apart. It was exciting to see them progress in health and fitness. With asynchronous learning, kids were on the honor system, and I’m not really sure how well that worked.”

The new normal means no dressing rooms, no changing clothes, and individual “PE kits” instead of shared equipment, says Betsy Erickson, a PE teacher at River City High School in West Sacramento, who was the 2021 Secondary Teacher of the Year for Washington Unified School District.

“We’ve provided every student an individual bag of equipment,” says Erickson, a member of West Sacramento Teachers Association. Depending on their grade, students may have a soccer ball, weights, resistance bands, jump rope, beanbags, or paddles for pickle ball in their bags.

“It’s absolutely been a slow start, and we are building up to more activity,” says Erickson. “I tell them it’s OK to walk around the track; they don’t have to be a runner right away. Many of them were out of school for an entire year. And I know it’s harder for them to exercise wearing masks.”

Doing things in the new normal takes longer, she observes. Students must sanitize their hands in between activities and figure out positioning to stay socially distanced. But students take it in stride.

“They want to be on campus instead of at home, and are pretty much willing to do whatever I ask them to do. They are willing to make the new normal work.”

Robin Chicca, a teacher at Monrovia High School, says students appreciate being able to exercise after quarantining. In previous years, there were “groans and grunts” when they were asked to exert themselves. Now they do so without complaining. They exercise outside for safety, and sometimes in high temperatures, so she doesn’t make things too strenuous as

PE: Vital Part of the Curriculum

PHYSICAL EDUCATION is a vital part of students’ learning. PE instructors follow K-12 state content standards.


California mandates at least 200 minutes of physical education every 10 school days in grades 1-6, and requires daily recess. The state also mandates at least 400 minutes every 10 school days of physical education in grades 7-8 and for all four years of high school. (During the pandemic, the state waived the PE requirements.)

California administers physical fitness tests to students in grades 5, 7 and 9. Tests measure:

- Aerobic capacity, with the one-mile run, 20-meter PACER, or walk test.
- Body composition (percent body fat).
- Abdominal strength and endurance, with the curl-up.
- Trunk extensor strength and flexibility, with the trunk lift.
- Upper body strength and endurance, with the push-up, modified pull-up, or flexed-arm hang.
- Flexibility, with the back-saver sit and reach, or the shoulder stretch.

To view test results by age and grade level, visit the California Department of Education (cde.ca.gov) and search for “fitness.”

they build up endurance.

“Now that they’ve opened up vaccines to include 12- to 16-year-olds, COVID cases will continue to go down and things can hopefully go back to normal,” says Chicca, a Monrovia Teachers Association member. 

“Students learned that the physical response to exercise is a boost in emotional health. I tried very hard to connect with my students emotionally during this time.”

—Robin Chicca, *Monrovia Teachers Association*



A return to health

Chicca emphasized to students throughout last year that working out helps with stress, anxiety and depression. Students were severely impacted; her campus lost two students to suicide in 2020.

“We did a whole lesson on brain chemicals and endorphins, and they learned that the physical response to exercise is a boost in emotional health. I have tried very hard to connect with my students emotionally during this time.”

“Research shows that when you exercise, it improves the brain,” says Felix Quiñónez, an elementary PE instructor named Teacher of the Year in Los Angeles Unified School District in 2020. “Exercise not only improves students’ mood, cognition and well-being; it also builds habits that lead to a longer and healthier quality of life.”



Felix Quiñónez

Quiñónez teaches students and mentors teachers at multiple elementary schools. Last year that meant modeling online lessons and creating upbeat Google slides.

“I want students to take ownership of their health, and offer them pathways to get there,” says the United Teachers Los Angeles member.

Quiñónez reminds students that self-care strengthens their immune system. “I incorporate brain health research in my

lessons, which shows that a lack of movement can lead to low blood flow, which is associated with anxiety. I frequently ask my students to share how they are feeling. Trauma-sensitive classroom practices help to foster social-emotional learning [SEL] and growth.”

Last year he combined standards-based lessons with web-based resources such as the Ready, Set, Gold! exercise and SEL program hosted by Olympians and Paralympians, and Kaiser Permanente resources that educate about the value of nutritious foods by promoting healthy snack recipes.

“Tech is here to stay in physical education because it improves teaching, learning, and assessments,” says Quiñónez. “Digital literacy is vital to a 21st century education.”

Rethinking PE as pandemic subsides

Sarah Bowers, the Ukiah High School teacher, believes that the pandemic has profoundly changed not only the world, but how physical education should be taught.

“I think we are more concerned about social-emotional learning aspects for students,” says the Ukiah Teachers Association member. “I wanted to humanize the experience and let students know that whatever they are feeling — including isolation and frustration — is OK. Going through the pandemic presented opportunities to have conversations with students and connect with them emotionally.” Bowers teaches general PE and has always incorporated yoga into that class. When she saw how much it was helping her students cope with pandemic stress, she asked to create entire yoga classes, which was recently approved by the school board.

“Yoga, meditation and breathwork allows you to go into a neutral state, so you don’t feel so frantic and anxious. When I asked students to reflect on their experiences, their responses floored me. They said ‘My chest loosened up,’ ‘My head cleared,’ ‘I felt more relaxed,’ and ‘I wanted to be here.’”

She is excited about going back to school — and also bringing students back to better health.

“We survived a traumatic time, and now we are stronger, able to thrive and move forward.” ■



Conditions to Thrive

Teaming up to support students, prepare for SEL needs

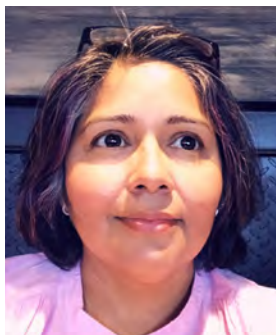
By Julian Peeples

“WE’RE REALLY hitting anxiety hard. Building those skills so they can cope with it,” says school counselor Marti Velasco. “If we don’t address the mental health piece, learning is not going to take place.”

At Sylvan Middle School in San Juan Unified School District, Velasco is part of a school intervention team comprising educators and student support staff focused on ensuring students get the support they need, whether it’s academic or otherwise.

“We try to look at the whole child. Maybe the student is going through some hard times and we connect them with a social worker. Sometimes it’s food or clothes. It’s whatever that child or family needs right then to be successful in

class,” says Velasco, a member of San Juan Teachers Association. “Our main goal at all times is to support that student and [have them] stay in the classroom, so they are able to learn.”



Marti Velasco

The keen eye on students’ social-emotional needs and trauma-informed approach is standard practice at Sylvan and other schools in San Juan Unified, but has intensified as students return to campuses after the challenges of the past year and a half. Velasco started planning for this school year last year, with outreach to feeder elementary schools to identify students who might need additional support, connecting them with caring adults and implementing a peer support system



SEL Tools


California Department of Education recently released a suite of tools on Transformative Social Emotional Learning (T-SEL) to help educators support the whole child. Materials include Kindergarten to Adult T-SEL Competencies; T-SEL Conditions for Thriving; and resources to support implementation. These tools, developed by the 2020 CDE Social and Emotional Learning State Team, aim to build on and respond to the call from stakeholders to embed equity-focused T-SEL in every teaching and learning context across the public education system.

Download T-SEL resources at cde.ca.gov/ci/se/tsel.asp.

“We’re doing SEL lessons on friendships, community, self-management and coping skills. It’s like SEL on steroids.”

—MARTI VELASCO,
San Juan Teachers Association

where eighth graders trained in support techniques are teamed with sixth graders.

“The transition year from elementary to middle school is hard. We’re doing a lot of our social-emotional lessons on friendships, community, self-management and coping skills,” says 

“The tone is ‘You have a place here.’ We want to build a strong relationship before we get into the curriculum.”

—DAVID VAZQUEZ, *San Juan Teachers Association*



Velasco, a school counselor with San Juan since 2006. “It’s like SEL on steroids.”

Math teacher David Vazquez is a member of the design team at San Juan’s Katherine Johnson Middle School, opening for the first time this school year. As students arrive on campus, he says, the goal is to immediately start building a sense of belonging, utilizing the Ron Clark Academy House System to create a community together (see box).

“The students need something to channel that energy,” says Vazquez, a member of San Juan Teachers Association. “It’s new, and we’re making it something that’s going to be spectacular.”

With many students away from the physical classroom environment for some time, Vazquez says, there will be a need to practice social skills, as well as a focus on building student-teacher relationships. Multi-disciplinary Learning Support Teams are already in place to help identify students with needs and connect them with support and services. Students at both Katherine Johnson and Sylvan will also have a flex period during which they will get timely supports as well as a choice of enrichment courses, from visual and performing arts to Vazquez’s offering on solar and renewable energy. Velasco says Sylvan’s flex period will include groups on anxiety, organization and anger management — sessions students said they wanted.

“The tone we’d like to set is ‘You have a place here,’ and we want to build a strong relationship before we get into the curriculum,” says Vazquez, a 10-year educator. “You’ve got to take your time to build that.”

The prep for starting the year is huge, Vazquez says, with staff spending a full week together to prepare the experience they want to give students when they step on campus. Velasco is continuing to do professional development with educators, on topics as serious and important as recognizing signs of suicidality in students.

“We’re going to give teachers tools, so they have the support they need,” Velasco says. “Everyone is walking through the door with different needs.” ■

The Ron Clark Academy House System
 The system randomly assigns incoming students and all staff to four Houses — learning and leadership communities — where students remain all their years at the school. Houses are meant to foster deeper connection among students across grade levels and interests as Houses hold healthy competitions with each other in academic and other arenas. Read more at rcahousesystem.com.

Creating Supportive Schools
 Tips from Marti Velasco and David Vazquez as students return to school:

- 1 Be deliberate.** Actively work to support students’ social emotional needs.
- 2 It’s all about relationships.** Focus on building relationships with students.
- 3 Take care of yourself.** You need to be well to help your students.
- 4 Every student is different.** Recognize that some will need more support than others.
- 5 If you see something, say something.** Identify students who may need help and connect them with support systems.
- 6 It will take time.** Be patient. Building relationships and supporting students’ social emotional needs are necessary for learning to occur.

FREEDOM to Teach the Truth



YOU TEACH the truth. That’s what educators do.

Teaching truth is integral to giving our children and young people the tools to navigate the world and shape the future as adults. The factual history of the United States tells students where we’ve been, how we got there, and where we may be going. Educators teach about the greatness of our country and the times when it has not lived up to the promise of “we the people.”

In this way, educators help students learn our shared stories, our diverse and complex history. This includes helping them understand the roots of inequality today, as well as how people have organized and created coalitions across race, class and gender to confront injustice and build a more perfect union.

“Teaching all of our children — regardless of their race or ZIP code, whether Native or newcomer — means teaching them the truth,”

wrote NEA President Becky Pringle in a recent opinion column. “We can teach about the horrors of slavery, internment and forced resettlement. We can have honest discussions about today’s injustices and the threats to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness that still exist for many. We can objectively present to students the good, bad and ugly of our past so that they can build a better, brighter future.”

CTA has long advocated for honesty in education — specifically, exposing students to a culturally comprehensive education through ethnic studies. CTA is currently co-sponsoring AB 101 by Jose Medina (D-Riverside), a bill that would make completion of an ethnic studies course mandatory for high school graduation, starting in the 2025-26 school year.

“We have a duty to teach our students about their ancestral legacies and to

celebrate them every day,” says CTA President E. Toby Boyd about AB 101. “Culture is essential in the fight for racial justice and equity.”

Unfortunately, multiple states and localities across the country have recently introduced or passed laws to bar teachers from speaking the truth about history and deny students the right to an honest education.

This runs counter to fundamental educator values. We must come together to speak out against such censorship and dishonesty. The stakes could not be higher: By teaching the truth, educators teach

integrity in how we treat others and courage to do what’s right — the foundations of a truly democratic society.

Students need honesty and expect the truth from us, their educators. ■

“We can objectively present the good, bad and ugly of our past so students can build a better, brighter future.”

—NEA President
Becky Pringle



SUPPORT HONESTY IN EDUCATION

PLEDGE TO #TeachTruth. Demand that our schools have the resources to meet every child’s needs with well-trained and supported teachers and a curriculum that helps them reckon with the past and shape our future. Join us by signing the pledge at neadjustice.org/honesty-in-education-pledge.

Record Education Funding

New state budget includes investment in special education, community schools By Julian Peoples

ON JUNE 28, the governor signed a 2021-22 budget that will provide \$93.7 billion in Proposition 98 funding to K-14 public education — the highest amount in state history.

The budget significantly expands child care, adds universal transitional kindergarten for 4-year-olds over the next five years, and creates the nation’s first free breakfast and lunch program for all students, starting in 2022-23.

“We welcome this budget’s historic commitment to public education and the support California students need at all stages of their lives, from expanding transitional kindergarten to significant investments in K-12 and higher education,” says CTA President E. Toby Boyd. “We commend the governor and the Legislature for investing in academic programs, as well as mental health and social and family supports, including the prioritization of establishing community schools for this coming year and beyond.”

Highlights of the budget include:



- \$5 billion over multiple years for summer school and other enrichment programs for elementary school students.
- Provision of a 5.07 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) and for community colleges.



- \$2.4 billion in several programs investing in teacher recruitment, training and retention.
- \$3 billion to expand community schools, with health services for students, day care, and mental health and family programs.



- \$1.9 billion, almost entirely from federal funding, to provide \$500 college savings accounts for every low-income California student in grades 1-12 in 2021-22. After this year, the state will provide \$170 million annually from the general fund to create a college savings account for every low-income first grader.



Independent study —
Expands the state’s independent study program and requires every public school district to offer a remote learning option for students who are medically fragile, cannot be vaccinated or whose parents do not feel safe sending them to school.

Transitional kindergarten —
Adopts universal transitional kindergarten, phasing in eligibility incrementally until full implementation in 2025-26. Provides ongoing funding for TK expansion of approximately \$2.7 billion at full implementation.



Special education —
Increases ongoing special education funding by \$396 million. Includes \$550 million in one-time funds to support students with disabilities and \$277.7 million in one-time federal IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) funds for local assistance.



Community colleges —

Provides a 5.07 percent COLA, or \$371.2 million in ongoing funding. Allocates \$100 million in ongoing Prop. 98 funding to increase the hiring of full-time faculty, and \$90 million one-time and \$10 million ongoing funding to support part-time faculty office hours; budgets \$20 million in one-time funding to support faculty professional development; and designates \$115 million in one-time funding for zero-text-book-cost degrees.

Behavioral health —

Invests a total of \$4.4 billion over five years to create a new, modern and innovative behavioral health system for children and youth up to age 25. This includes \$205 million for the Mental Health Student Services Act to fund school and county mental health partnerships that support the mental health and emotional needs of children and youth as they return to schools and everyday life.

Pandemic Do-Over

New law gives California students an opportunity to redo a grade level By Lisa Gardiner

ON JULY 1 Gov. Gavin Newsom signed into law a bill that requires schools to create a process for learning and grade recovery as a result of the pandemic.

Assembly Bill 104 went into effect immediately and allows parents of students who were in grades K-11 in 2020 and who have a D, F, or an equivalent grade in at least half of their courses to request that the student be held back a year.

“Now that our kids are returning to the classroom, we need to focus on supporting students who have fallen behind and lost a year of educational progress,” said the bill’s author, Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez (D-San Diego), in a statement. “AB 104 provides students and parents with immediate steps they can take to help their children get back on track.”

Studies have found that COVID-19 school disruptions significantly impacted student learning, especially among low-income students and English learners.

The bill provides that within 30 days of receiving a written request for retention, schools must offer parents and the student a consultation meeting with an administrator and teacher. The consultation must include a discussion of learning options, a consideration of the student’s academic record, and research on the effects of pupil retention.

Schools have the ultimate authority to decide whether to retain a student and are required to notify the parent of their

decision within 10 days of the consultation meeting.

High school students can apply to have a letter grade replaced with a pass/no pass grade. The grade changes must not negatively impact a student’s grade point average. The law requires that the CSU system accept the pass/no pass grades without prejudice, and encourages the UC system and private colleges to do the same.

The bill requires that the California Department of Education post a list of all colleges and universities within the state that have indicated they will accept pass/no pass grades without prejudice. It also requires that the CDE provide schools with an application template for grade changes. Schools are required to inform students and families of this grade change option on their website and in writing.

Students enrolled in their last two years of high school in 2020-21 and who are not on track to graduate are exempt from all coursework that is in addition to the statewide coursework requirements. Schools must provide these students with a chance to complete the statewide coursework required for graduation, including allowing a fifth year of instruction or credit recovery.

CTA took a neutral position on this legislation as it made its way through the legislative process.

Vote No on the Recall

Gov. Newsom is committed to strong public schools and communities

By Julian Peeples

EDUCATORS URGE CALIFORNIANS to vote no in the Sept. 14 recall election and keep proven leader and friend of public education Gavin Newsom at the helm as governor.

CTA State Council of Education voted overwhelmingly at its June meeting to oppose the recall and support Gov. Newsom, who has a history of working side by side with educators for the resources our schools need and our students deserve.

“Educators stand in strong opposition to the recall of Gov. Newsom,” CTA President E. Toby Boyd says. “From our classroom vantage point during the pandemic, we didn’t always agree on approach, but we’ve never questioned his commitment to California’s students and public education.”

At a time when public funds are needed to support our schools, students and families, the state will spend an estimated \$276 million to hold the recall election a year before the next regularly scheduled gubernatorial election. The recall effort is funded by anti-union billionaires who want to roll back decades of progress and defund public education, with the goal of putting forth a school voucher initiative in 2022.

“The donors belong to a national network of billionaires who attack public education and are actively

working to lower wages, eliminate healthcare and undermine our voting rights,” Boyd says. “We’ve made a lot of progress as a state, and we look forward to working with a large and broad coalition to defeat this anti-worker, anti-union recall effort.”

Newsom continues to support California’s public schools, colleges, working families and communities. In February, he prioritized vaccines for educators, paving the way for a safe return to in-person instruction. Newsom’s budget provides record funding for public education, with landmark investments in early childhood education, community schools, and a focus on the whole child.

“The governor’s budget includes historic increases for the restart and recovery of our school and college campuses,” Boyd says. “His plan to expand transitional kindergarten to all 4-year-olds and his investment in social and emotional supports will help give students a promising start to a bright future.”

Newsom is also leading with record investments to address California’s affordable housing and homelessness crisis, expand affordable health care and child care, and increase wildfire preparedness.

“Gov. Newsom’s commitment to California’s working families and communities is long-standing,” Boyd says. “He has worked with educators to bring accountability and transparency to corporate charter schools, support equity and social justice, and protect workers’ safety and rights on the job.”



Gov. Gavin Newsom

Mail voting will begin Aug. 16, and all voters must be registered by Aug. 30 to vote unconditionally in the recall election. Polling places will also be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Sept. 14. Check your registration status and find your polling place at voterstatus.sos.ca.gov.

Boyd urges all educators to support Gov. Newsom and vote no on the recall.

“We have to stop this recall, and I hope that you will help us,” he says.

For more information, visit cta.org/recall. ■



HOW WILL THE RECALL ELECTION WORK?

All California voters will receive a ballot in the mail asking for a vote on the recall and then a selection for governor. If a majority votes yes on the recall, the candidate with the most votes becomes governor. It is possible for the winner to receive less than 50 percent of the votes.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Julian Peoples

Part-Time Faculty Parity Bill Stalls in Committee

THE DECADES-LONG struggle for parity for part-time community college faculty will continue after a bill sponsored by CTA and the Community College Association (CCA) stalled in the Assembly Appropriations Committee in late May, effectively ending its chances of becoming law.

AB 1269 by Assembly Member Cristina Garcia (D-Bell Gardens) would have required the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to conduct a comprehensive study of part-time faculty and identify specific policy recommendations to achieve pay equity by 2027. The bill cruised through the Assembly Committee on Higher Education before getting unexpectedly held up in Appropriations and moved to the inactive file. Though disappointing, the setback is not the end of the righteous fight for part-time parity.

"We knew that righting the wrongs of decades of inequity and

exploitation would be a heavy lift, and we are resolved to continue the fight," CCA Vice President Randa Wahbe says.

While it's difficult to tell why AB 1269 was held in committee, the only public opposition to the bill disappointingly came from the Chancellor's Office, whose own analysis outlining why they opposed it highlights that part-time faculty are paid half as much as full-time faculty with little to no movement to address the issue. CTA and CCA are working with Garcia, the bill's co-sponsors and other supporters to determine the next steps.

"The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office recognizes that inequity exists for 70 percent of the faculty in the system yet opposed legislation that aimed to address the issue," Wahbe says. "CCA and CTA cannot allow the status quo in the California Community Colleges system to continue harming our faculty and our students."

CTA-Co-Sponsored Bill Updates

AB 101 (Medina): Adds the completion of a one-semester course in ethnic studies to the state high school graduation requirements, beginning with students graduating in the 2029–30 school year, and requires all local educational agencies to offer an ethnic studies course to students commencing with the 2025–26 school year to satisfy the requirement; students would complete one of four course options. *Update: Passed the Assembly in May (58-9), scheduled for hearing by Senate Appropriations Committee on Aug. 16.*

AB 388 (Medina): Requires that a certificated employee of any local educational agency who completes two consecutive school years and is then rehired is classified as a permanent employee. Many CTE and adult education teachers do not have a pathway to permanent status, while educators in some districts have been inappropriately classified year after year to deny them permanent status. *Update: Passed*

the Assembly in June (52-17), referred to the suspense file on July 15.

AB 438 (Reyes): Revises provisions related to the layoff of ESP employees to require notices and opportunities for a hearing when a classified employee's services will not be required for the ensuing year due to lack of work or lack of funds, in efforts to establish parity between the layoff processes for classified and certificated school employees.

Update: Passed the Assembly in May (57-14), referred to the suspense file on July 15.

AB 545 (Quirk): Requires the completion of a comprehensive assessment of major tax expenditures by July 1, 2023, and a report to be delivered to the Legislature on this data by Jan. 1, 2024. This will provide greater oversight over some of the costliest tax credits that impact General Fund revenues. *Update: Passed the Assembly in June*

(58-20), scheduled for hearing by the Senate Appropriations Committee on Aug. 16.

AB 563 (Berman): Requires the California Department of Education to establish an Office of School-Based Health Programs to improve the operation of and participation in school-based health programs. *Update: Passed the Assembly (76-0), failed to receive a hearing by the Senate education and health committees.*

SB 294 (Leyva): Removes the 12-year limitation for CalSTRS or CalPERS service credit earned on an employer-approved compensated leave. This cap unfairly impacts education employees, harming the ability of elected leaders to take a leave of absence to represent their union without losing benefits. *Update: Passed the Senate (29-7), awaiting third reading by full Assembly.*

A Boost for Aspiring Educators

CTA scores victory in teaching credential requirements

By Julian Peebles

CALIFORNIA TEACHER candidates will now have to take two fewer tests to earn a credential if they complete approved coursework, after lawmakers approved the changes as part of the recently adopted Education Omnibus Budget Trailer Bill, AB 130.

After lobbying by CTA and Student CTA, the approval of AB 130 means teacher candidates will no longer be required to pass the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST) or California Subject Exams for Teachers (CSET) to earn a credential. Almost half of aspiring educators statewide experience trouble passing one or more of the four tests previously required to earn a credential, according to the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) — with 66 percent passing CBEST on the first attempt in 2019-20 and 67 percent passing CSET on the first try.

“These changes occurred as a result of sustained advocacy by members, leaders and staff, and will help remove obstructions to entering the teaching profession that have disproportionately impacted teacher candidates of color,” says CTA President E. Toby Boyd. “Join me in thanking the Credential and Professional

Development Committee and Student CTA for their advocacy and leadership on this important issue.”

Signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom on July 9, AB 130 creates new options for aspiring teachers to meet the Basic Skills Requirement (BSR) and to demonstrate Subject Matter Competence (SMC). Teacher candidates will now be able to meet the BSR by completing qualified college coursework with a grade of B or better in reading, writing and mathematics. The following options were also added for candidates to demonstrate SMC:

Single Subject Teaching Credential: Complete a college academic major in the subject area of a credential defined in statute.

Multiple Subject Teaching Credential: Complete a college academic program in liberal studies or an interdisciplinary major that covers the content areas of the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential.

Education Specialist: The major must meet the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential requirements or be in a subject aligned to authorized CSET examination content areas used for an Education Specialist Credential.

“As teachers, we often say high-stakes

“These changes will help remove obstructions to entering the profession that have disproportionately impacted teacher candidates of color.”

—CTA President **E. Toby Boyd**

TEACH Program Changes

The U.S. Department of Education announced changes to the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program in July that, among other things, allow recipients more time and flexibility to complete their service requirements before their grants are converted to loans.

Program changes are reflected on the TEACH Grant Program page at [StudentAid.gov/teach](https://studentaid.gov/teach) and on the TEACH Grant loan servicer’s website. The servicer will contact recipients affected by the changes.

The program provides grants of up to \$4,000 each year to students who are completing or plan to complete course work needed to begin a teaching career. The TEACH Grant requires recipients to agree to complete four years of teaching in a high-need field at an underserved school as a condition for receiving the grant.

state tests are more a snapshot about a student’s test-taking skills than an authentic assessment of their mastery,” says Kimberly Nguyen, a member of Hacienda-La Puente Teachers Association. “So, it would make sense that a more authentic assessment of subject competency would be a reasonable alternative.”

Aspiring educators will still be required to complete the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) and Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) prior to earning a Clear Credential, but testing flexibilities enacted for last school year will be extended for 2021-22 as part of AB 130. The law further grants authority to the CTC to extend flexibilities related to RICA, CBEST and CSET should disruptions continue to impede testing access and availability. ■

BARGAINING ROUNDUP

Compiled by **Julian Peoples**



CLOVIS:

School psychologists file for union recognition

Clovis school psychologists in June filed a petition with the California Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) to form a union, **Association of Clovis Educators** — the first ever for certificated professionals in the school district's history.

Nearly 75 percent of Clovis Unified School District's 78 school psychologists signed a union support petition, only a few months after a historic organizing campaign began among Clovis educators. A union of school psychologists is a first step toward a larger organizing effort designed to give all Clovis educators a real voice in education decisions, currently underway and expected to continue into the next school year.

Once the union support petition is certified by PERB, representatives from ACE and the district will sit down and begin discussing issues and negotiating their first collective bargaining agreement.

"This pandemic has revealed how very critical it is that schools prioritize student mental health in the upcoming year," says Tamara Soemali, a school

psychologist who has been with Clovis Unified for 25 years. "Our union, a building block to our larger efforts to organize throughout the district, will allow us to have a meaningful seat at the table as critical decisions are being made surrounding the unprecedented state and federal resources available to our schools. Our voice will help ensure that our students not just recover but thrive after this pandemic."

"OUR VOICE WILL HELP ENSURE THAT OUR STUDENTS NOT JUST RECOVER BUT THRIVE AFTER THIS PANDEMIC."

—**Tamara Soemali**,
Association of
Clovis Educators

On April 5, Clovis teachers, psychologists, itinerant specialists, school counselors and other educators in the district announced the formation of ACE to build a union so that educators could have a meaningful, independent voice in decisions that impact students and schools.

"We are very proud to be paving the way for other educators' organizing efforts and call on the district to respect our right to organize and speak with a unified voice on behalf of the students we serve," Soemali says.

For more information about ACE, go to cloviseducators.org.





TWIN HILLS:

Fight continues for fair pay

Twin Hills Teachers Association members are organizing for a livable wage that is fair, just and equitable, preparing to strike if necessary to win the resources they need to survive. The average wage for THTA educators is \$69,594 — about \$15,000 below the state average and not enough to pay for housing and other needs in Sonoma County, one of the least affordable counties in the nation.

An extended contract dispute with Twin Hills Union School District recently went to fact-finding, where THTA educators delivered compelling testimony showing how they are not valued or respected by the district. Many Twin Hills educators work second and even third jobs to make ends meet, while others simply find work in another district.

“Living without a reasonable salary is really hard on the soul,” says former THTA member and education specialist Lacey Reese. “I started to look in neighboring counties and have been hired for the same position with a 25 percent increase in pay, full health coverage for myself and my son, and a team that appears happy, partly because they are being paid a livable wage for good work.”

Though the impartial fact-finder found that THTA educators are not being paid fairly, the recommendation of a 4 percent one-time bonus will not address the long-term problem of the district refusing to make their educators a priority.

LOS ANGELES:

Educators approve agreement to return to full in-person learning

United Teachers Los Angeles overwhelmingly approved an agreement with the school district in June on safety protocols and other conditions for the full physical reopening of schools for the 2021-22 school year.

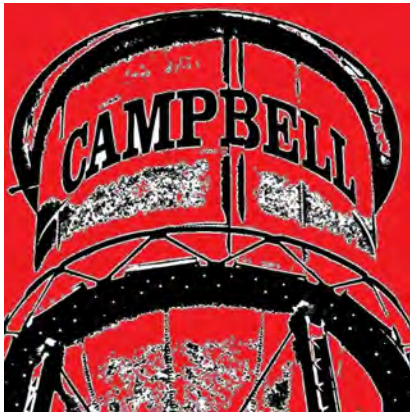
“With the approval of this agreement, schools across Los Angeles will have critical COVID safety protocols in place when we welcome students back to the joys of full-time in-person learning,” UTLA President Cecily Myart-Cruz says. “The pandemic has challenged students, families and educators in ways unimaginable, but it has also triggered innovation and taught us lasting lessons about the power of public education to heal. Educators are committed to meeting our students where they are and creating the healthy, healing, equitable schools that our students and their families deserve.”

The agreement maintains many of the necessary COVID-19 protocols that are proven to keep students, staff, families and the education community safe, including COVID testing, screening, ventilation, cleaning and disinfecting of school facilities, and a COVID-19 Compliance Task Force at every school. LA Unified has the lowest number of COVID infections among the nation’s largest school districts because of the safety protocols that educators, parents and community members have fought for and won.



“THE PANDEMIC HAS CHALLENGED STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS, BUT IT HAS ALSO TRIGGERED INNOVATION AND TAUGHT ABOUT THE POWER OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TO HEAL.”

—UTLA President
Cecily Myart-Cruz



CAMPBELL:

Arbitrator rules in educators' favor

Campbell High School Teachers Association scored a victory for educators when an arbitrator ruled that Campbell Union High School District violated their collective bargaining agreement multiple times.

On multiple occasions since January 2020, CUHSD violated the contract when it refused to allow CHSTA representatives to attend an informal grievance meeting, according to CHSTA President Kim McCarthy.

"Part of our rights as a union is to represent our members at meetings and enforce our collectively bargained agreement. The district violated that agreement," she says. "Our union would like to see the district act in good faith with the educators who support students' academic, emotional and social well-being."

The arbitrator ordered CUHSD to cease and desist their actions that are in violation of the contract, protecting educators' rights.

Correction: Our June/July 2021 issue incorrectly stated the stipend amount for Stockton Teachers Association members for distance learning-related work resulting from the pandemic. The amount is \$400.

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PANDEMIC PERSPECTIVES

Experiences during distance learning shape educators' approaches to supporting students

By **Julian Peeples**

“Being at summer school is reminding me how much I missed it and how much these students need us in person,” says continuation high school teacher and San Bernardino Teachers Association member Jade Smith. “I really hope we can take what we learned last year and carry it forward.”

Across the state, schools are opening in person for the school year after 18 months of uncertainty, and educators are eager to use their experiences of distance learning to support their students as they emerge from the pandemic. The

sudden move to a virtual environment left many educators feeling like first-year teachers again (and some actually were!). Others experienced pandemic learning as learners also, completing advanced degrees and certifications virtually and gaining firsthand insight into the challenges their students faced.

“Distance learning was a real stressful experience,” says science educator Stephen Gorgone, who virtually completed Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) certification at UC Irvine. “Distance learning is hard — it’s hard to focus, stay engaged, and it takes a lot out of you. The experience gave me a lot of perspective for my students, and I changed things after that.”



Jade Smith

THE LEARNING NEVER STOPPED

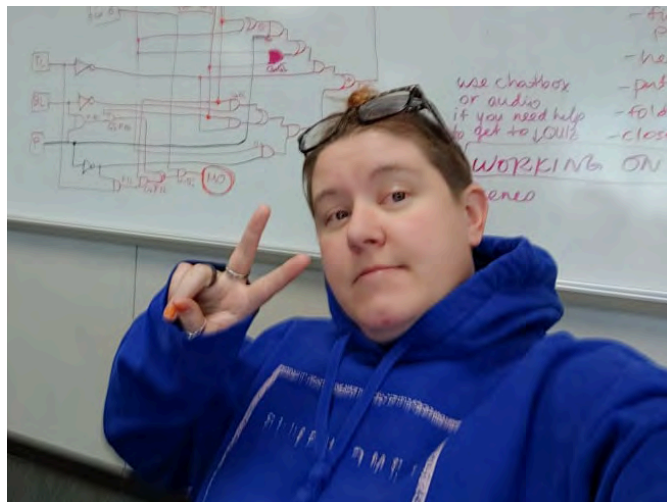
Though classrooms and school buildings closed in March 2020, the learning never stopped for students and educators alike. In addition to teaching English and career technical education (CTE) at San Andreas Continuation High School in San Bernardino, Smith completed two courses virtually for her CTE credential



“IT WAS A HARD DECISION TO MAKE. BUT FOR ME IT WAS MODELING TO MY STUDENTS WHAT IT MEANS TO PERSEVERE.”

—TAUNYA JACO, *San Jose Teachers Association*, on taking a leave of absence to focus on her doctorate

Left: Taunya Jaco; below: Beth Traub



demands of the self-driven, asynchronous program were rigorous, and Traub spent multiple hours a day studying, in addition to their teaching responsibilities, which also took more time in a distance learning environment.

“I felt like I was always on the computer,” Traub says. “One hour of classwork is two to three hours of work at home.”

The experience made Traub more empathetic to what their students were going through as distance learners, including being realistic about their time and distractions at home, and giving them grace at a time when they could probably use it. The weight of teaching and learning remotely at the same time was heavier than Traub expected, and it made them look at how they might better help support students during the unique time.

“I underestimated the amount of stress I was under,” says Traub, a member of Pittsburg Education Association. “The stress of teaching and learning made me feel perpetually stretched thin, underscoring the need for coping mechanisms and how much my students need to learn them. We need to explicitly teach how to manage their stress and workload.”

Gorgone, a member of Santa Ana Educators Association, completed his NGSS certification with a course in culturally relevant pedagogy that explored using topics relevant to students’ experiences to create more successful lessons. He says being apart from his students in distance learning made it difficult to build the connections needed to create a successful classroom experience.

“My experience taking the certification reminded me how important it is to really know students and find out what their lives are like.”

Taunya Jaco started a doctoral program in educational leadership at San Jose State University in 2018, with the pandemic impacting her dissertation year. She had planned for two years to film educators in schools as part of a documentary film study about the creation of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum, but shifted gears to Zoom interviews and archival footage when visiting



Stephen Gorgone

during the pandemic: a curriculum course through UC San Diego and a master gardener course.

Her experiences as a distance learner were like those of her own students. Smith says that her four-hour classes on Saturday mornings felt even longer, and engagement was difficult and tedious. Additionally, it was hard to be disciplined and motivated from behind a screen. She used these experiences to change the way she approached teaching virtually.

“We need to have something every day where we are engaged to keep students interested and motivated,” Smith says.

Beth Traub, an engineering and computer science teacher at Pittsburg High School, says it had been 16 years since they had needed to study and write papers when they started a master’s program in educational leadership at Western Governors University last year. The



Continued on page 47



◀ Miyuki Manzanedo at the end of her first week teaching.

“AT MY SITE, I FELT LIKE A VALUED, EXPERIENCED MEMBER, NOT A NEW, INEXPERIENCED TEACHER.”

—MIYUKI MANZANEDO,
Davis Teachers Association

Amezcuca spent her first year teaching as a mild/moderate resource specialist in San Pasqual Union School District, with a caseload of 25 students. While the school year started in distance learning, Amezcuca began seeing students in person around Labor Day a couple of times every week when special education cohorts returned to campus. Steadily, more and more students began coming back to campus for

longer periods of time, until all students were on campus for full days after spring break.

The workload was strenuous, with the added stress of statewide assessments and IEPs (Individualized Education Programs) on the job and studying and assignments for her master’s program at CSU San Marcos after hours. Unlike Manzanedo, Amezcuca didn’t feel supported by her colleagues, which she says was a tough place as she tried to survive the year.

“I was really lucky my students were amazing,” says Amezcuca, explaining that the resilience of students with special needs was especially inspiring. “I learned to believe in my students a lot more and what they’re capable of doing. A lot of them grew up this year and they really didn’t have a choice.”

Erin Githens was hitting her stride in her first year of teaching in March 2020 when the pandemic closed schools statewide. She says the sudden move to distance learning shifted her focus to the social-emotional health of her students and how she could best support

their unique needs when distance learning resumed in the fall.

“It was an asset that I had only taught a year, because I wasn’t attached to the way anything was done before,” says Githens, a member of United Teachers Los Angeles.

Learning to be empathetic to her students was a big lesson Manzanedo learned from her master’s

A FIRST YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

TAKE THE MEMORABLE difficulty of an educator’s first year of teaching, add in an unprecedented pandemic, and finish it off with a master’s program all at the same time, and you have an idea of what the past year has been like for educators Miyuki Manzanedo and Irene Amezcuca.

“I don’t know how I did it,” says Amezcuca. “It was very stressful.”

Manzanedo taught a bilingual second grade class (80 percent in Spanish) in Davis Joint Unified School District while completing a joint credential and master’s program at UC Davis. She was hired in March 2020, the month school buildings statewide were closed to prevent spread of COVID-19, and started the school year in distance learning.

“I was meeting these kids over a camera. I felt like I was being robbed of the experiences first-year teachers get to have,” says Manzanedo, who taught virtually from her classroom because she shares a studio apartment with her husband, who was also a first-year teacher. “I didn’t know anyone at the school. Even staff meeting Zooms had black boxes!”

Her initial frustration turned into an opportunity for her, having completed her credential in distance learning and being familiar with current instructional technology. This made Manzanedo popular with some of her more seasoned educator colleagues, who sought her out for tech tips and assistance.

“At my site, I felt like a valued, experienced member, not a new, inexperienced teacher,” says Manzanedo, a member of Davis Teachers Association. “In many ways, my colleagues were also first-year teachers again.”



Irene Amezcuca



Erin Githens

Continued from page 45

instructor, who walked the cohort through how she was changing their syllabus as a result of the pandemic.

"She showed us such grace but still held us to high standards," Manzanedo says. "She reaffirmed that over a computer you can hold your students to high standards while remaining flexible — and it reminds me to approach my students the same way."

Amezcuca, soon to be a member of Escondido Secondary Teachers Association, is looking forward to creating a culture and building relationships in her own classroom this fall in a new environment: a moderate/severe special day class at Escondido High School. Manzanedo hopes she can recreate the relationships she was able to build with her first-year class as she and they went through the strangest year ever together.

"There was a way we got close to each other," she says. "I'm excited for next year, but I'm also kind of scared because I'll feel like a first-year teacher again."

"MY EXPERIENCE TAKING THE CERTIFICATION REMINDED ME HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO REALLY KNOW STUDENTS AND FIND OUT WHAT THEIR LIVES ARE LIKE."

—STEPHEN GORGONE, *Santa Ana Educators Association*

school sites became impossible. The time demands of completing her dissertation and working full time as a sixth grade teacher in distance learning proved to be too much, and Jaco took an educational leave of absence to focus on her doctorate.

"It was a hard decision to make," says Jaco, a member of San Jose Teachers Association and the CTA Board of Directors. "But for me, it was about modeling to my students about what it means to persevere."

Jaco says the pandemic spurred a shift in public education, where the focus was placed on the social-emotional health of students, and "things that don't matter" were given less time and attention. As students return to physical classrooms this fall, she hopes the attention to the whole child continues with educators leading the charge to reimagine schools.

"We as educators need to have a mindset shift and recognize the power we have to advocate for students and what they need," Jaco says. "We have the power to transform public education." ■



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Summertime...

... and the teaching was easy (kind of) *By Sherry Posnick-Goodwin*

WE KNOW WHAT you did this summer. Many of you taught summer school, and stepped up on short notice.

Ninety percent of California districts offered summer school, according to EdSource. That's because \$4.6 billion was allocated for "extra learning time" by Gov. Gavin Newsom to offset academic setbacks from the pandemic, which especially impacted low-income students and those with poor internet access.

Though Newsom did not specify that summer school should be fun, many teachers report that it was enjoyable. That's a good thing, because after living through a pandemic, students and teachers desperately needed fun.

"We haven't held summer school like this in many years," says Leigh Cambra, a health teacher at Carmel High School who served as "principal" for K-8 summer

school session for Carmel Unified School District. "We were worried that teachers wouldn't want to do it. It was a very rough year. But I was pleasantly surprised that so many teachers signed up."

A way to connect with students

In Carmel, the focus of summer school was social-emotional learning (SEL), says Cambra, a member of the Association of Carmel Teachers.

"Students had to get into the rhythm and pattern of school. Some students had not been in a classroom for over a year. Some weren't used to being in groups. So, although we were playing catch-up academically, we focused on SEL because if students are not emotionally ready to learn, it doesn't matter how great the teacher is."



Leigh Cambra

"WE FOCUSED ON SEL BECAUSE IF STUDENTS ARE NOT EMOTIONALLY READY TO LEARN, IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW GREAT THE TEACHER IS."

—LEIGH CAMBRA,
Association of Carmel Teachers



◀ Fourth graders in Yolanda Stack’s classes learned about science, math and art through hands-on activities.

“EVERYBODY WAS TIRED OF BEING ON COMPUTERS. SO I TRIED TO BE FUN AND CREATIVE.”

—YOLANDA STACK, *Eastside Teachers Association*

Playing catch-up

“I wouldn’t call teaching in a pandemic lost time, but it felt like I was teaching a year’s worth of math and literacy in a month to students who are learning more than just the academics,” says Rick Gallegos.

The Hidalgo Elementary School teacher and Fresno Teachers Association member taught fourth grade math and literacy during the summer.

Some educators who had been teaching remotely had anxiety about returning to a classroom again, she adds. Summer school was a way to ease back into in-person instruction.

“I would say summer school was a huge success, and we saw growth in students.”

David Cuestas, a teacher at Dos Caminos Dual Immersion School, jokes that he “selfishly” decided to teach summer school so he could bond with the incoming eighth graders he’ll be teaching this year. He enjoyed the stimulating conversations and student participation that was lacking in online instruction, because many students had their cameras off.

“Some students in summer school — especially those who had done distance learning last year — learned how to take responsibility for their work, which is much easier with an adult present,” observes the Palmdale Elementary Teachers Association member. “Students learned how to work together and collaborate. It’s easier in person than in an online breakout room.”

It was the first time in his 28-year teaching career that his district offered summer school for dual immersion students, says Cuestas.

“It was a great experience that prepared everyone for regular school.”



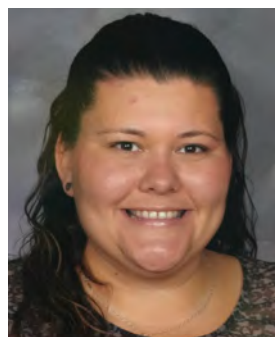
Yolanda Stack



David Cuestas



Richard Gallegos



Barbara Infante

“Academically, some students learned to use digital tools in the pandemic, but many students neglected the opportunity to learn, which was a missed opportunity.”

Summer school was a time of parent-teacher team building and was a “lifeline” toward improving student success, says Gallegos. He believes this will carry over to the new year.

Barbara Infante, a teacher at Stratford Elementary, appreciated being able to focus on first graders who were struggling. Because her summer school was an intervention program, she only had five students.

“It was very positive not only for students, but for myself,” says Infante, who teaches in the town of Stratford near Fresno. “I loved the change of pace. Last year I taught a first and second grade combination class in the morning and then had Zoom class in the afternoon.”

Infante, a member of the Central Union Elementary Teachers Association, says some students progressed more during a few weeks in summer than during the entire school year online.

“It was a very positive ending to a school year that was very, very stressful.”





Genevieve Lunt

“WE REBUILT CLASSROOM AND COMMUNITY. THE KIDS THOROUGHLY ENJOYED IT AND SAW A DIFFERENT SIDE OF US. TEACHERS SAW A DIFFERENT SIDE OF OURSELVES.”

—GENEVIEVE LUNT, *Santa Ana Educators Association*

Keeping it fun

Yolanda Stack, a fourth grade teacher at Tierra Bonita Elementary School in Lancaster, had a roomful of Chromebooks for summer school, and the students never opened them once.

“Everybody got sick and tired of being on computers in the pandemic,” says the Eastside Teachers Association member. “So I tried to be fun and creative and still play catch-up with students who enjoyed reading books, making presentations, doing worksheets and using math manipulatives. I incorporated science, music and art into hands-on activities, which students missed during COVID.”

Students were separated by Plexiglas and wore masks and stayed 3 feet apart, but were happy to be there.

“We had so much fun. We were getting into a groove. Then, sadly, it was over.”

Faith Hurst-Bilinski, a teacher at Davidson Elementary School in San Bernardino, was surprised when nearly a third of the 400 students in her school enrolled in summer school. Summer session was the first time students had seen each other in person in over a year.

“Our mission was creating a fun way for students to readjust to school, see other students and adults in person, and provide a safe space for students who are struggling,” says Hurst-Bilinski, a member of San Bernardino Teachers Association. “We were aware that three weeks was not going to make up for all the skills that were missing. But we knew that being too rigorous on students who had been gone for a year and a half was not going to be beneficial. So we focused on SEL, project-based learning and games to address basic skills.”



Faith Hurst-Bilinski

Her fourth and fifth graders had to remake the story of “The Three Little Pigs” and write a pitch to a film company explaining why it should be made into a movie. They loved the assignment.

Educators told summer school students they’d be leaders this year at school because they are so prepared and know how to do school. Students were sad when it was over.

Exploring hidden talents

“We created a camp,” says Genevieve Lunt, a teacher at Heninger Elementary School. “This was not something students in our poverty- and trauma-filled area typically have available to them.”

It was the first time any students had returned to campus since March 2020, says Lunt, a member of the Santa Ana Educators Association. Many were fearful, because the community was hit extremely hard by the coronavirus.

“Our middle school teachers and the principal taught their passions to students,” says Lunt, who regularly teaches English. For summer school, she shared her passion for teamwork, collaboration and volleyball. Other teachers shared interests such as Ballet Folklórico, poetry and film, baking using math, photography, and the “history of 4th Street, visiting a street rich with history in the downtown area.”

“We rebuilt classroom and community. The kids thoroughly enjoyed it. Students saw a different side of us — and teachers saw a different side of ourselves. I would say, all in all, it was a huge success. ■

Former 49ers player Ben Garland high-fives excited students.



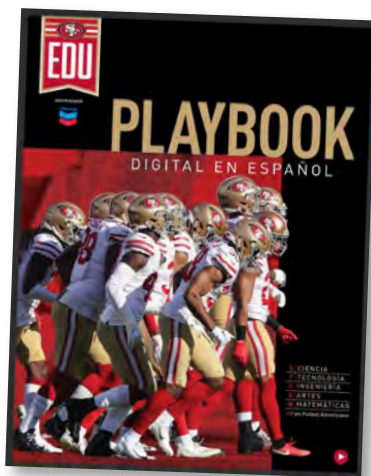
WINNING LESSONS

Kick off the school year with a little football

FOOTBALL SEASON is upon us — and engaging and teaching students through a popular sport makes sense on many levels.


That's the idea behind 49ers EDU, the National Football League team's educational arm. Back in 2013, when the 49ers' new stadium was being built in Santa Clara, the York family, owners of the team, decided to develop an educational curriculum for local children and youth.

"When Levi's Stadium was constructed, the Yorks wanted to do something for the Bay Area community," says Jesse Lovejoy, director of 49ers EDU. He adds the program, which offers educational services directly rather than through a vendor, is unique to the NFL.



The Spanish edition of the Playbook was launched last spring.

Since it launched in 2014, 49ers EDU has developed a standards-aligned STEAM curriculum for K-8 students, both in person and online. It leverages football and Levi's Stadium as platforms to connect, engage and inspire students and educators. Science and math teachers and representatives from the Lawrence Hall of Science, the Exploratorium and the Monterey Bay Aquarium, among others, serve on the program's education advisory committee.

The curriculum is aligned to Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards. "Project-based learning is the main pedagogy," Lovejoy says. Including Lovejoy, the 49ers EDU staff of six includes four 



▲ Teacher Jhulsany Futol (pointing in the air) brought his first graders on a 49ers EDU field trip last year.



◀ 49ers player K'Waun Williams with students.

full-time instructors.

Teacher Jhulsany Futol brought his first grade class on a field trip to Levi's last year shortly before in-person experiences were suspended due to the pandemic. 49ers EDU let the United Educators of San Francisco member invite another first grade class at his school as well.

"We did a lot of physical activities," Futol recalls. "It was a force and movement lab with different stations. The kids did drills similar to football drills — running, maneuvering through obstacles. It was their favorite field trip of the year."

Last fall, Futol's new group of first graders participated in a 49ers EDU virtual lesson, which they enjoyed. "It was a combination of arts and geometry. The instructor did a tutorial using different

shapes in football for kids to draw," he says.

All 49ers EDU offerings are free. The program has thus far served more than 350,000 participants, including during the pandemic, when in-person field trips were suspended. More than 60 percent of students have come from Title I schools.

49ers EDU offers three main components:

- **The Playbook**, a textbook that students receive at in-person sessions. The book is online as **The Digital Playbook**, available for free in English and, as of this past spring, in Spanish.

- **The Digital Playbook Video Review Series**, which provides context and detail related to specific pages of the Playbook on such topics as the physics, art and

math of football; nutrition and fitness; and more.

- **The Virtual Lesson Series**, such as what Futol's class did. Launched this past spring, lessons are 45 minutes and delivered via Zoom. Lovejoy's team beta tested them with teachers who had their field trips to Levi's canceled due to COVID.

Virtual lessons are confined to Bay Area schools right now because of capacity issues, says Lovejoy. "We'll continue our virtual programming because we reach more kids," he says. "But it doesn't replace the impact of being in person in the stadium."

49ers EDU is expanding its offerings, with a lesson on data analytics in development, new videos and interactive components on tap, and a



◀ 49ers player Robbie Gould looks to hand off.

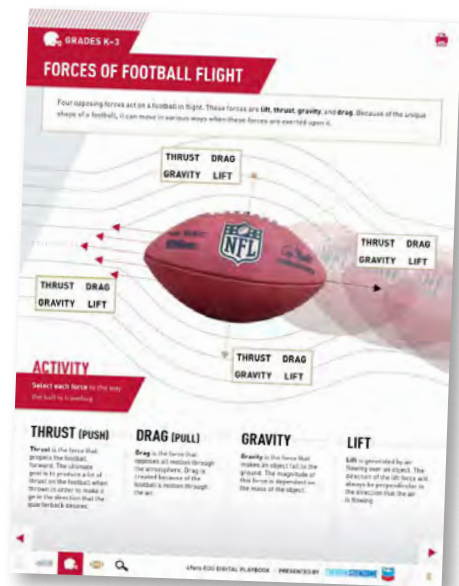
high school-specific curriculum in the future.

The program “takes cues from the Bay Area education ecosystem” and responds to student and educator needs and interests, Lovejoy says. For example, the playbook was translated

into Spanish, and the staff is looking into creating versions of current lessons in Spanish, as a result of demand.

49ers EDU is a win for students — on or off the field.

For more information, go to 49ers.com/community/49ersedu. ■



A page from the Playbook; it examines “forces of football flight.”



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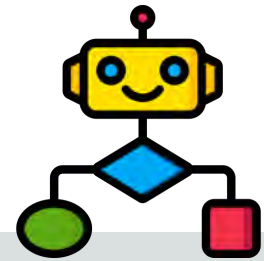
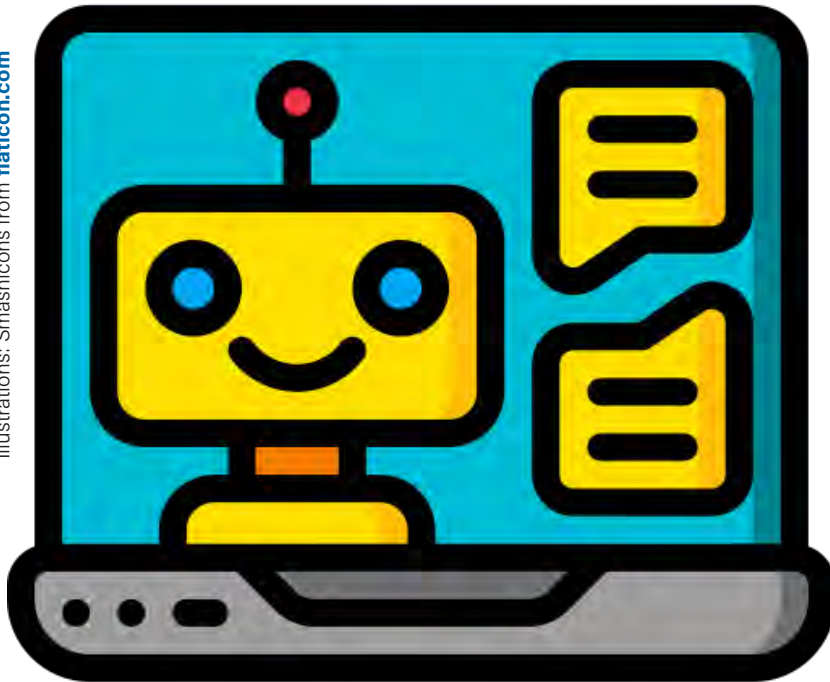
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after you make at least \$500 in purchases within the first 90 days of account opening (students not eligible)

Illustrations: Smashicons from flaticon.com



WHERE TO GET STARTED?

Botsify.com

Use drag-and-drop templates to create a Facebook Messenger chatbot.

Chatfuel.com

Build an Instagram chatbot without having to touch a single line of code.

TRANSFORM YOUR TEACHING WITH A CHATBOT

By Terry Ng

YOU MAY BE familiar with using a chatbot on your favorite retail site to answer shopping questions, or perhaps to answer basic health questions before visiting a doctor. Did you know that you can also set up a chatbot for your classroom as a teaching assistant?

Education chatbots allow educators to populate lesson materials, answers to frequently asked questions and other engaging resources to assist your students in learning. Here are some creative ways chatbots are being used in the classroom today:

NO LIMIT

Have multiple students with questions? A chatbot can answer students' questions without them having to wait in line. A chatbot has endless patience and can answer repetitive questions about deadlines, exercises and lessons, no matter how many times they've been asked, day or night.

SAVE TIME

Have a multiple-choice test? Use a chatbot to deploy and score the test for you. As machine learning algorithms improve, chatbots will also be able to score open-ended assignments like essays.

PROACTIVE REMINDERS

A chatbot doesn't just answer questions. It can also be set up to send homework reminders, class news, lesson details, and other important messages.

PERSONAL TUTORS

Not every student learns the same way, with many needing one-on-one attention. Using AI technology, chatbots can tailor learning by analyzing what subject gives an individual student the most trouble and deliver review materials that will help them learn at a pace they're comfortable with.

ENGAGING EXPERIENCE

Chatbots can use decision trees to guide students through a series of questions and answers to help them understand a subject better, or they can tap into a library of interactive tutorials to deliver relevant content to students. In ways like these, chatbots can supplement reading a textbook.

WHAT YOU SAID

We asked you to tell us your pandemic silver lining and your unsung hero, after publishing just such stories in our June/July issue. And we asked what's on your mind as the new school year starts. Here's what you said.

My Silver Lining

I LIVE IN Rancho Palos Verdes. After retiring in 2005, I continued my love of teaching math by tutoring. Shortly after the pandemic hit, my husband of 62 years was diagnosed with coronavirus and died. I was heartbroken, but when I got a call in August 2020 to tutor an honors geometry student, I bought a document camera and jumped on Zoom. Those tutoring sessions, engrossed in helping that boy, were my happiest times amid sadness.

The student I was tutoring later revealed that his honors geometry teacher had left and the class was struggling with substitutes. I decided to help and applied to be an occasional substitute in the district, knowing classes would be online and safe.

During the last three months of school, when partial in-person classes were starting, the district again needed a long-term substitute (the fifth) for the math teacher who had left. Administrators found a creative solution by hiring math teacher JoAnne Myers, who had



Aakanksha Panwar/Unsplash

recently moved to the area, to teach online, and hiring me to be the in-class teacher. (For health reasons she could not come into the classroom.)

Together, JoAnne and I went on a crusade to motivate those students. Some had given up. Many were failing. JoAnne met privately with students, enlisted parents, and posted extra videos of math problems and solutions. I supported her in the classroom and provided homework and test solutions for her to post online; students had to



Pat Brewster

complete missed homework and tests.

At semester's end, almost all the students passed. JoAnne said, "I couldn't have done it without Pat's help." For me, it was a thrill to work with a most excellent and truly caring teacher. I learned some amazing tech skills from JoAnne. We were a great combination.

DOROTHY "PAT" BREWSTER
CTA/NEA-Retired

Continued on page 56



WHAT'S ON MY MIND

As I reflect on the past 15 months, I am grateful that so many of my colleagues, administrators, parents and students recognized the importance of physical education. As a PE teacher, I have seen it overlooked in many ways throughout the years, including students being taken out of class for numerous reasons because, hey, it's just PE, right?

PE has always taught the importance of mental and physical health (something we all needed to concentrate on while in remote learning) through an SEL lens. My hope is that California continues to support and honor the important work that PE educators do every day for all our students. **PATRICK DALEY**, *Palos Verdes Faculty Association*

Silver Lining

Continued from page 55

For over 20 years I was an elementary instrumental and vocal music teacher. When I retired in 2016, I usually had two concert or festival gigs per month and a few workshops. Then COVID hit. All concerts, festivals and events were canceled.

I began posting YouTube videos and sharing them via Facebook, Instagram, etc. Some ladies from South Carolina emailed me, wondering if I could teach ukulele via Zoom? I wasn't sure but said I'd try. That was over a year ago and we're still going strong. Several other students have joined since then. We're having a blast!

Teachers are very resourceful. We know how to make lemonade out of lemons. Most important: Teaching and music don't stop. We just have a different venue.

BILL DEMPSEY
CTA/NEA-Retired

Before the pandemic, I thought I was substantially computer literate. But I could not believe I was going to teach my 13th year of first grade online! Once I got the hang of Zoom, I mastered our snap scanner, which meant I could share PDFs of papers with parents and colleagues. I learned how to use and share the online reading curriculum so stories were easily read and heard by students, and how to hook up a document camera — an absolute necessity — to my computer.

I became much more patient, such as when connection issues made students late and they would want me to restart. One of the most popular online drawing lesson sites was a lifesaver, as were multiple read-aloud videos. DVDs of popular *PBS Kids* videos reinforced learning, and the kids

Before COVID-19 my district planned a K-6 technology immersion school. Being a 54-year teaching veteran, I believe in experiential education — it is more engaging and yields higher test scores. But most teachers said, "No, if we just had one-on-one computers everything would be fine."

Then came the pandemic. My district was good at technology: Every student had computer access; teachers were well trained. But I still felt a lack. In spring 2020, students had no textbooks at home, so I mailed out paper packets. We compared Cinderella stories, did science fair projects and a Shakespeare play — virtually. By fall all students were issued a full set of



“After a year of teaching online, I have newfound confidence and patience for in-person teaching.”

—KIM DARLING LOISEL,
Fremont Unified District Teachers Association

really enjoyed them. After a year of teaching online, I have newfound confidence and patience for in-person teaching in fall 2021.

KIM DARLING LOISEL
Fremont Unified District Teachers Association

textbooks and a computer. By midwinter they were given paper packets and art supplies. By spring the big push was “student engagement.”

My 30 second graders already *were* engaged! They had had apple tasting, learning to distinguish several types. They had made backyard gardens in apple grocery boxes, and had an extra arts hour each school day. My Silver Lining conclusion: For student engagement and optimal learning, it's experiential learning!

CATHERINE OSMAN
Association of Chino Teachers

MY UNSUNG HEROES

Gonzalo and Felicitas Mendez fought for the desegregation of schools in Orange County, California, and won in 1947, seven years before *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). The obscure though extremely important *Mendez v. Westminster* case came to light when the youngest Mendez daughter (born after the case was decided) read about it while in college. She asked her parents, and her mother said, “Yes, we did that.” Very humble people changed our world with their courage to speak up. **ANDREA EARL**, *Santa Ana Educators Association*



Felicitas and Gonzalo Mendez

2019-20 Summary Annual Report

For CTA Economic Benefits Trust Member Welfare Benefit Plan

THIS IS A SUMMARY of the annual report of the California Teachers Association Economic Benefits Trust Member Welfare Benefit Plan, EIN 94-0362310, Plan No. 590, for the period Sept. 1, 2019, through Aug. 31, 2020. The annual report has been filed with the Employee Benefits Security Administration, as required under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

Insurance Information

The plan has contracts with Standard Insurance Company to pay life insurance, temporary disability, long-term disability, and accidental death and dismemberment claims incurred under the terms of the plan. The total premiums paid for the plan year ending Aug. 31, 2020, were \$46,293,521.

Because they are so-called “experience-rated” contracts, the premium costs are affected by, among other things, the number and size of claims. Of the total insurance premiums paid for the plan year ending Aug. 31, 2020, the premiums paid under such “experience-rated” contracts were \$46,293,521 and the total of all benefit claims paid under these contracts during the plan year was \$26,874,747.

Basic Financial Statement

The value of plan assets, after subtracting liabilities of the plan, was \$140,760,261 as of Aug. 31, 2020, compared to \$125,537,653 as of Sept. 1, 2019. During the plan year, the plan experienced an increase in its net assets of \$15,222,608. This increase includes unrealized appreciation and depreciation in the value of plan assets; that is, the difference between the value of the plan’s assets at the end of the year and the value of the assets at the beginning of the year or the cost of

assets acquired during the year. During the plan year, the plan had total income of \$64,334,109, including employee contributions of \$46,365,475, realized gains of \$242,021 from the sale of assets, earnings from investments of \$6,551,904, and other income of \$11,174,709.

Plan expenses were \$49,111,501. These expenses included \$1,870,373 in administrative expenses, and \$47,241,128 in benefits paid to participants and beneficiaries.

Your Rights to Additional Information

You have the right to receive a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, on request. The items listed below are included in that report:

- An accountant’s report;
- Financial information;
- Assets held for investment;
- Insurance information, including sales commissions paid by insurance carriers.

To obtain a copy of the full annual report, or any part thereof, contact the office of the California Teachers Association, in care of Carole Anne Luckenbach (the plan administrator), 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010, or call 650-697-1400.

You also have the right to receive from the plan administrator, on request and at no charge, a statement of the assets and liabilities of the plan and accompanying notes, or a statement of income and expenses of the plan and accompanying notes, or both. If you request a copy of the full annual report from the plan administrator, these two statements and accompanying notes will be included as part of that report.

You also have the legally protected

right to examine the annual report at the main office of the plan (California Teachers Association, 1705 Murchison Drive, Burlingame, CA 94010) and at the U.S. Department of Labor in Washington, D.C., or to obtain a copy from the U.S. Department of Labor upon payment of copying costs. Requests to the Department should be addressed to: Public Disclosure Room, Room N-1513, Employee Benefits Security Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20210.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13)(PRA), no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. The Department notes that a Federal agency cannot conduct or sponsor a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. See 44 U.S.C. 3507. Also, notwithstanding any other provisions of law, no person shall be subject to penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if the collection of information does not display a currently valid OMB control number. See 44 U.S.C. 3512.

The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average less than one minute per notice (approximately 3 hours and 11 minutes per plan). Interested parties are encouraged to send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Attention: Departmental Clearance Officer, 200 Constitution Avenue NW, Room N-1301, Washington, DC 20210 or email DOL_PRA_PUBLIC@dol.gov and reference the OMB Control Number 1210-0040.

**OMB Control Number 1210-0040
(expires 06/30/2022)**



MEDIA EXCELLENCE

The 2021 winners of CTA's John Swett Awards

CTA'S 62ND ANNUAL John Swett Awards for Media Excellence honored 14 individuals, publications, websites and broadcast media for their outstanding achievements in reporting and interpreting public education issues during 2020.

"During one of the hardest times for California's educators and students, these skilled reporters told stories about triumphs, challenges and perseverance displayed by educators fighting for the success and safety of their students," says CTA President E. Toby Boyd. "Their outstanding work is based on truth and vigor, and we are so proud to honor them for their dedication to quality journalism."

Entries were judged by an independent panel of working journalists and media professionals. The awards are named for the founder of CTA, who was California's fourth superintendent of public instruction and a crusader for public education.

Winners were celebrated virtually at CTA's June State Council of Education. See our press release at cta.org/swett21 for links to winning entries and a link to our video honoring Swett Award recipients.

NEWSPAPERS

- Dan Albano, *The Orange County Register*, for continuous coverage of education during the pandemic, including how educators acclimated to distance learning.
- Paloma Esquivel, *Los Angeles Times*, for the story on sixth grade teacher and Inglewood Teachers Association President Aba Ngissah, who went above and beyond to support students, parents and fellow educators at the beginning of the pandemic.
- Bay Area News Group, for fair and detailed coverage of COVID-19 issues impacting educators in the greater Bay Area.
- Emma Gallegos, *The Bakersfield Californian*, for her balanced coverage of the challenges and triumphs facing schools during distance learning.
- Christine Bedell, *The Bakersfield Californian*, for her story on how educators and students in Kern County adapted to distance learning and kept engaged in the learning process.
- Garrett Leahy, *48 Hills*, for his story on an action in San Francisco by a coalition of educators, nurses and parents supporting a ballot measure that would change California's tax structure and invest in public education and communities.
- *The Bakersfield Californian*, for coverage of distance learning from several perspectives and recognizing educators and students for their achievements.
- Katherine Minkiewicz-Martine, *Sonoma West Publishers: The Healdsburg Tribune*, for her story on Sonoma County educators collectively fighting for safe conditions for their students and peers before returning to in-person instruction.

STUDENT JOURNALISM

- *Branham Bear Witness* for its professional print layout and impressive content. Its education coverage always made connections between students and the local and global community. CTA member Fitzgerald Vo, a chemistry and journalism teacher at Branham High in San Jose, has advised the publication for the past five years.

JOURNALS, MAGAZINES, SPECIAL PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES

- Samuel Getachew, *Teen Vogue*, for his story on how Oakland student organizers fought for and won the right to vote for youth age 16 and over in school board elections.
- Brooke Anderson, *In These Times*, for her story profiling Oakland Education Association members and other educators across the Bay Area who donated their stimulus checks to undocumented workers.
- *Capital and Main* for its series "The Year of Living Dangerously," which explored the pandemic's impact on different aspects of teaching and learning.

TELEVISION

- Sharon Chin and Jennifer Mistrot, KPIX CBS, for their story on fifth grade teacher Frank Lara, who led United Educators of San Francisco members' efforts to donate part of their stimulus checks to support undocumented families during the pandemic.
- ABC 10 in Sacramento, for five profiles of local inspiring educators as part of its "Teacher of the Month" series. Educators honored: Mike Lobitz, Talia Chapman-Martin, Jennifer Sinclair, Suzan Sae Lee and Tari Lawson.



Back-to-School Deals

Save up to 50 percent with CTA Access to Savings

TEACHERS EVERYWHERE are prepping their classrooms to help make the school year a success. As you search for your supplies and the gear you need, keep Access to Savings in mind. This CTA benefit has you covered with A+ deals such as:

Samsung:

Save up to 40 percent off your purchase.

Apple:

Up to \$200 off any eligible Mac and \$20 off an iPad Pro with Apple education pricing.

Office Depot:

Save up to 50 percent when you shop online or in-store.

Discount School Supply:

\$20 off \$150 or more; \$15 off \$100 or more.

Access to Savings not only has your school needs covered, but also offers discounts on dining, travel, entertainment, clothing and accessories and much more. See what your fellow educators are saying:



“I’m always surprised at the variety of discounts, from electronics to arts and crafts.”

—ERIKA ZAMORA, *Santa Ana Educators Association*



“This program helps me stay in my budget!”

—PATRICIA CRUZ, *Menifee Teachers Association*



Ready to make the upcoming school year great and save some money doing it? Visit CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access to start saving, or download the My Deals mobile app to save on the go. With the mobile app, you can take advantage of GPS search, an intuitive mapping tool that makes finding what you need fast and effortless, and location-based alerts that will notify you when you’re in close proximity to a deal. Happy saving!

Lit From Within

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

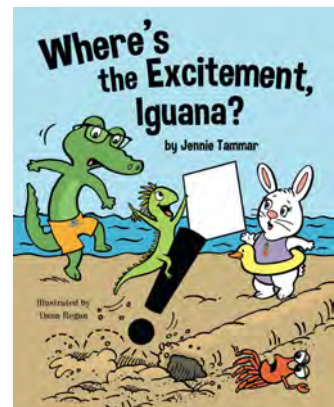
Phone Etiquette

Learning some basic rules about cell phone usage while young can set the tone for children and youth as they grow. *My First Cell Phone Rules!!!* by Davis Teachers Association member **Allison B. Chan** follows Hippopotamoose as he learns proper phone etiquette from his animal friends. In catchy rhymes and cute scenarios, topics covered include paying attention to your surroundings when using a phone, appropriate times to use it, and reminders to take breaks from it to enjoy the world around you. On Amazon.



Beach Day Excitement

Where's the Excitement, Iguana? finds Iguana and friends' fun day disturbed when enormous exclamation marks appear and confuse them. Will the group be able to fix the problem, or will the exclamation marks create too much excitement? The book, by Natomas Teachers Association member **Jennie Tammar**, is a great supplement for PK-3 (and beyond) writing lessons. It picks up directly where Tammar's first book (*What's the Punctuation, Iguana?*) leaves off. On Amazon.



Oh, the Horror!

As his author profile on Amazon says, **Evan Baughfman** works in a very scary place: a middle school! The UTLA member fittingly writes horror fiction, among other genres. His latest collection of scary stories is *The Emaciated Man and Other Terrifying Tales From Poe Middle School*, published in fall 2020 (on Amazon).



Baughfman, who teaches theater and creative writing at a STEAM magnet school, is also a playwright. In December 2020 he published his play for elementary school students, *Sprout Wants Out* (on Amazon). The month prior he came out with "spooky" plays for teens, *Fear Pressure* and *The Dodo Challenge* (on nextstagepress.net), and in August he published his *Romeo and Juliet*-inspired play for teens, *Untragically Ever After* (at hitplays.com).

Got something for this page? Tell us at editor@cta.org with "Lit From Within" in the subject line. We lean toward new(ish) work that can be used in the classroom.



Membership Manual

2021-2022

Meet Your Leaders	2
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Organizing for change
Supporting your growth
Advocating for education
Funding innovations
Saving you money
Connecting your world

#WeAreCTA

WHETHER YOU'RE JUST STARTING OUT, PREPARING TO RETIRE, OR SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN, A CAREER IN PUBLIC EDUCATION CAN SEEM LIKE A LABYRINTH TO NAVIGATE ON YOUR OWN. LUCKILY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO. #WEARECTA AND WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK.

ORGANIZING FOR POWER

DID YOU KNOW?

California is home to the fifth-largest economy in the world, more than 10,500 public schools and 9 million students.



Strength in Numbers

Did you know you're the engine that (em)powers CTA? But not just you. We're all in it together.

Just by being a member, you're helping teachers all across California negotiate smaller class sizes and safer working and learning conditions. Your membership is helping an education support professional in another district bargain a living wage and a veteran educator retire with dignity. And your membership adds to our power to secure and share cost savings through the CTA and NEA Member Benefits programs.

And collectively, as one voice, we've made a lot of important changes through the years — at the local school board, at the California State Capitol, and in the halls of our nation's Capitol.

CTA IS A REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY.

As a CTA member, you get to vote for someone to represent you on the CTA State Council of Education, CTA's largest governing body. You also vote for your own local chapter officers and delegates to NEA's Representative Assembly, which is the largest union governing body in the country.

The 743 State Council representatives, in turn, elect the three state-level CTA officers and the CTA Board of Directors. Together, the state officers, the Board of Directors, and State Council set CTA's priorities and goals.

At the national level, the NEA Representative Assembly delegates, the officers, and the NEA Board of Directors do the same.



E. Toby Boyd
PRESIDENT
Kindergarten Teacher
Elk Grove Education Association



David Goldberg
VICE PRESIDENT
Bilingual Teacher
United Teachers Los Angeles



Leslie Littman
SECRETARY-TREASURER
History Teacher
Hart District Teachers Association



Joe Boyd
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Former Educator
Longtime Organizer

OUT OF MANY, ONE!

Together, we number 3 million members across the country. That's 310,000 just in California from nearly 1,100 chapters. At the same time, it all comes down to you. As a member-driven organization, you decide, well, everything! From the trainings CTA offers to what we fight for at the Capitol, you steer CTA's course.



This is what it means to be member-driven.

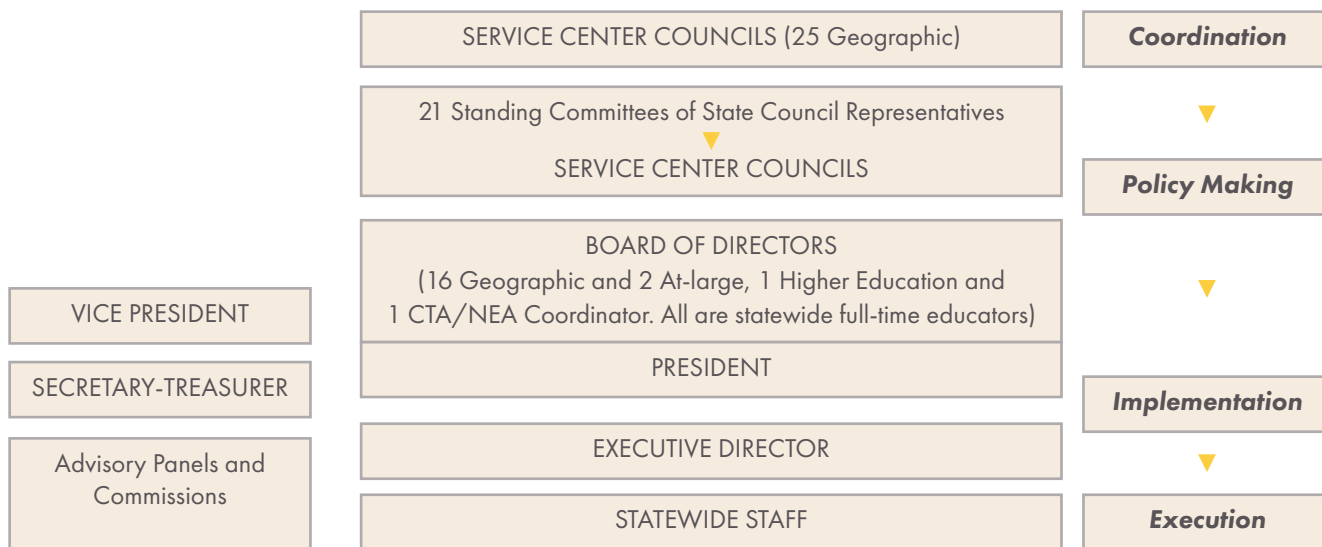
EVERY MEMBER HAS A VOICE.

CTA's organization ensures that every member has a voice and a vote in determining our union's values, goals and leaders. CTA members just like you built, maintain and enhance this structure to advocate for, support and defend the public schools our students deserve, and focus on the needs of educators working hard to make a difference in classrooms.

MEMBERS



Small Chapters share State Council Representatives.
Large Chapters have more than one (on average — one representative per 449 members)



TO DATE, CTA MEMBERS HAVE FUNDED 453 INNOVATION GRANT PROJECTS, TOTALING MORE THAN \$5.2 MILLION.

SUPPORTING YOUR GROWTH

Instruction & Professional Development

Building Your Skills

CTA offers top-notch professional development opportunities designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Whether it's attending one of our conferences, participating in a training or workshop, or applying for a scholarship or grant, CTA can help you be the best educator you can be!

EVENTS & CONFERENCES

Our statewide multiday, multifaceted conferences deliver knowledge and skills for CTA members on a variety of topics including teaching and learning, racial justice and equity, LGBTQ+ issues, education advocacy, new and veteran educator issues, and leadership training. Most sessions are recorded (see next page). Together with specialized trainings and workshops held throughout the year, CTA meets your professional development needs at every stage of your career.

INNOVATIONS IN STUDENT LEARNING

CTA members are at the forefront of innovative ideas for student learning and transforming the profession. CTA's **Institute for Teaching (IFT)**, funded by member dues, offers substantial grants for innovative ideas, whether in one classroom or schoolwide. See page 9 for more information.

Other components of IFT:

Thrively Collaboration: A webinar series emphasizing "A Strengths-Driven Approach to Student Learning & Engagement." (University credit available.)

Think Tanks: Members come together to discuss and collaborate on critical educational issues.

Learn more at cta.org/IFT.

CTA's Instruction and Professional Development (cta.org/IPD) is a hub where you'll find information, resources and opportunities to build and improve your skills. These include:

- CTA/NEA microcertifications — short, competency-based courses that let you demonstrate mastery in a particular area.
- Access to communities of practice through CTA's Instructional Leadership Corps (ILC) — educator-led professional development.
- A program to jump-start your path to National Board Certification.
- An ongoing calendar of topical webinars and in-person seminars.





“Best conference ever! Brimming with enthusiasm to DO THE WORK that equity requires.”

“I’ve had such an amazing time. I cannot wait to bring back so many useful concepts and strategies, and networking with amazing teachers has been incredible!”

“The energy at the conference was so much passion, curiosity and excitement!”



LEARN VIRTUALLY, TOO!

Find digital resources, upcoming webinars, and recorded materials on distance learning at cta.org/IPD.

At the same place you can also find ILC webinars on such subjects as mindfulness, ed tech, assessment tools and tips, English Language Development and Universal Design for Learning.

Can't make it to one of CTA's conferences in person? Just visit cta.org/VirtualPass and browse through our catalog of past conference workshops.

Conferences

When you attend a CTA conference, you experience engaging workshops, perspectives from some of the best content experts and thought leaders in public education, and opportunities to network with colleagues. The skills and information from our conferences can be immediately applied to your role as an educator and local leader.

Community College Association

Oct. 15–17, 2021

Feb. 11–13, 2022

April 29–May 1, 2022

Student CTA Events

Nov. 6–7, 2021

April 23–24, 2022

New Educator Weekends

Dec. 10–12, 2021 (South)

Feb. 25–27, 2022 (North)

LGBTQ+ Issues

Oct. 29–31, 2021

Issues

Jan. 21–23, 2022

Good Teaching

Jan. 28–30, 2022 (North)

March 18–20, 2022 (South)

CTA/NEA-Retired

March 3–4, 2022

Equity and Human Rights

March 4–6, 2022

Presidents

July 14–17, 2022

Summer Institute

July 24–28, 2022

Visit cta.org/conferences for current information on locations and dates.

FROM THE STREETS OF OUR COMMUNITIES TO THE STEPS OF THE STATE CAPITOL, EDUCATORS ACROSS CALIFORNIA HAVE STOOD TOGETHER FOR THE RIGHT OF EVERY STUDENT TO A QUALITY PUBLIC EDUCATION.



ADVOCATING FOR EDUCATION

Building a Better State for Public Education

Since our founding in 1863, CTA has built a legacy of standing together and working for our members, our students, our craft, and the belief that public education is a cornerstone of American democracy.

It's these shared values that unite us and make us strong, as 310,000 CTA members from El Centro to Eureka and everywhere in between stand ready to support each other, fight for our students, and defend our schools and community colleges.

While we are unified in our mission and voice, our differences are a major part of what makes us stronger together. Though we are diverse in so many ways, we share an important focus: Advocating for our students, schools and communities. Ensuring that there is a place for everyone in CTA is a value that requires a solid foundation and structure built to be inclusive and equitable, so that every member is seen and heard.

Guided by our values and powered by our solidarity, CTA continues our mission for even greater successes in the years ahead. We will continue to fight for seats at the table in our local communities and the State Capitol, to let our voices be heard, and to work with elected officials who believe in our vision for strong, vibrant public schools that serve all students.

When CTA stands tall for a brighter tomorrow, there's nothing that can stop us. Because together, We Are CTA.

Learn more about our issues at cta.org/TakeAction.

158 YEARS OF ADVOCACY... A SMALL SAMPLING

1863

CTA is founded by Superintendent of Public Instruction John Swett with fewer than 100 members, all male.

1866

CTA's first legislative win establishes free public schools for all California children — including schools for students of color.

1890

CTA wins state Supreme Court ruling on "fair dismissal" law.

1911

CTA leads state funding fight to establish community colleges. At CTA's urging, free textbooks are printed and distributed at state expense.

1913

California State Teachers' Retirement System is created by legislation after CTA State Council calls for a statewide teacher pension system in 1910.

1927

CTA wins legal victory when state Supreme Court rules that a school board cannot fire a female teacher simply because she married.

Leaders & Advocates



With more than 310,000 educators dedicated to each other, our students and the power of public education, CTA makes a difference every day. With unity brings strength.

Maggie Peacock-Butler,
2021 ESP OF THE YEAR, *Potter Valley Education Support Professionals Association*



Equity, racial and social justice, and economic fairness is achieved not because of the benevolence of those in power but through the collective efforts of courageous people and organizations like CTA.

Telly Tse, CTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
Beverly Hills Education Association



#WeAreCTA is much more than a mindset, but rather a call to arms that reminds us of the power in collective organizing to better support our members, students and communities.

Yurii Camacho, NEA BOARD OF DIRECTORS,
Holtville Teachers Association



Public school educators have the power to change and improve the lives of young people. As CTA members, we have the collective voice to make that change.

Keith Brown, PRESIDENT,
Oakland Education Association



Our Advocacy Road Map

CTA's structure, agenda, long-term plan and policies are contained in the Organizational Handbook. This handbook is our road map, providing the vision and path to accomplish the important work we do. For 158 years, educators have crafted, molded and shaped bylaws and policies to help build our association into the powerful voice for educators it is today. Our agenda and goals are rooted in policies developed by our State Council of Education and set forth in this handbook.

More at cta.org/OrgHandbook.

Go to cta.org/history for the Big List.

1940

CTA is one of a few organizations in California to protest internment of Japanese Americans at the beginning of World War II.

1967

CTA establishes schools for children of migrant workers and leads the authorization of bilingual instruction classes for English learners.

1975

CTA-sponsored Rodda Act passes making K-14 school employees the first public employees in California to win collective bargaining rights.

1988

CTA drafts and wins passage of Proposition 98, which guarantees a minimum portion of state money to fund K-14 education.

1996

CTA wins Class Size Reduction law for K-3 classrooms.

2005

CTA defeats initiatives that would have cut school funding, destroyed teachers' due process rights, and silenced the voices of public employees.

ADVOCATING FOR EDUCATION

Fighting for Justice

CTA has a legacy of fighting for justice — for our members and students, and for the shared values we hold dear. This starts with representation on the job when members are treated unfairly, members stand up for students being treated unfairly, or management is pulling something funny. Sometimes these issues require additional expertise, and CTA has an experienced team of attorneys who provide legal advice and assistance to protect the rights of our members and defend our students.

The shared belief that a better world is possible has guided our union since our founding, when a small group of teachers successfully established free public schools for all children in California — including schools that educate students of color. During our 158 years, CTA has fought for justice in our schools and communities — leading efforts to outlaw child labor and enact other legal protections for children; vehemently opposing the internment of Japanese Americans at the beginning of World War II; fighting for the rights of immigrant families to pursue the American Dream; and declaring without exception that Black Lives Matter.

CTA's legacy of fighting for justice and progress informs our efforts as we work for a brighter tomorrow.

Read up on the issues we care about at cta.org/Our-Advocacy.

WE'RE STILL ADVOCATING!

2006

CTA authors the Quality Education Investment Act to help schools that serve higher percentages of low-income students and English learners to close the achievement gap.

2012

CTA leads fight to pass Proposition 30, generating \$42 billion for public schools and local services over seven years.

2019

CTA helps pass landmark accountability and transparency reforms to charter school laws.

2020-21

CTA actively opposes hate, discrimination and violence and supports honesty in education.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Thanks to years of strong union advocacy, California educators have certain rights guaranteed by law on the job.

“

If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative be present.

— Weingarten Rights



Download this mini guide to your rights at cta.org/YourRights.

WELCOME ALL STUDENTS

Social justice for all begins with a free, quality public education. For that to happen our students need to feel welcome in schools and seen by their educators.

For resources, videos, posters and shareables to create welcoming learning environments for all students, visit cta.org/SocialJustice.



LISTEN UP: BACK IN OUR DAY...

Visit the CTA Oral History project at cta.org/OralHistory to listen to the voices and memories of our CTA members. Knowing where we've been helps us shape our future.



FUNDING INNOVATION

Teacher-driven & Strength-based

Through special programs, research, conferences, networking, the mobilization of teachers, and community-based coalitions, the Institute for Teaching (IFT) seeks to advance public education and promote the common good of our students and communities. That's all.

IFT found that school change must include two key factors: It needs to be teacher-driven, and it should be based on what is working and successful in our schools and classrooms.

INNOVATION GRANTS

One of the ways IFT helps struggling students and schools is by awarding innovation grants directly to CTA members and local chapters. To date, CTA members have funded 453 grant projects totaling more than \$5.2 million.

All CTA members are eligible to apply for an Educator grant (up to \$5,000) or an Impact grant (up to \$20,000).

To learn more about everything IFT does and the grants offered, go to cta.org/IFT.

SCHOLARSHIPS & AWARDS

CTA provides grants and awards to educators and members of the community who promote quality public education and impact their students and community. Has your chapter produced exceptionally effective communications? Know a colleague who actively works for social justice and human rights? Those are just a few of the awards we offer. We also award educational scholarships to help support CTA members and their families during the academic year.

Here's a sampling.

CTA scholarships for members and dependents, including:

1. Scholarships up to \$5,000 for dependent children of CTA members.
2. Scholarships up to \$3,000 for members.

LGBTQ+ Safety in Schools Grant & Scholarship Program in Honor of Guy DeRosa

Grants up to \$2,500 to support groups, projects and presentations that promote understanding of and respect for LGBTQ+ persons; scholarships up to \$2,500 for self-described LGBTQ+ members pursuing careers in public education.

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarship Program

Scholarships up to \$6,000 for members and dependents to encourage students of color to become educators, school nurses, school counselors or school therapists.

César E. Chávez and Dolores Huerta Education Awards Program

Awards up to \$550 for both sponsoring educators and students who demonstrate an understanding of the vision and principles of César Chávez and Dolores Huerta with an essay or visual art project.

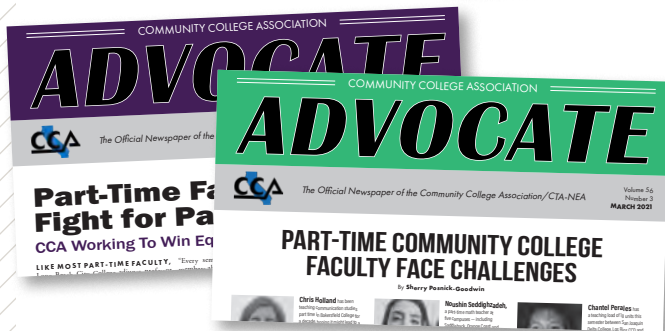
VISIT [CTA.ORG/SCHOLARSHIPS](https://cta.org/scholarships) FOR MORE.

CONNECTING YOUR WORLD

Staying Informed

Sometimes you just want to turn the page and learn about what's going on with public schools and colleges.

Don't miss CTA's award-winning publications that spotlight important issues in our public schools and community colleges, as well as amazing members who go above and beyond to reach students. CTA's official magazine, *California Educator*, is published every two months, mailed to all members and updated regularly at cta.org/educator.



Printed four times a year, *CCA Advocate* is the official publication of the Community College Association, CTA's affiliate union representing community college faculty and educators across the state.

GET SOCIAL, CONNECT WITH EDUCATORS AND TAKE THE MOVEMENT DIGITAL!

The world interacts on social media, and CTA members are there. And it's not just sharing memes and pictures of food. CTA members are talking about some major issues on CTA social media pages and in online groups — engaging in dialogues and sharing resources about equity, social justice, classroom techniques, distance learning, education trends, and ways to get connected with CTA and the movement for the schools all students deserve.

Join the conversation using the hashtag #WeAreCTA to connect with educators from CTA and beyond to discuss education, share teaching and learning tips, and take the fight for public schools digital.

www.CTA.org

And don't forget our home on the web, the newly redesigned cta.org, which makes it easier than ever to find educator resources and information about upcoming CTA events, conferences and professional development opportunities.

Updated and upgraded in 2020 with more to come in the months ahead, cta.org is a one-stop shop for all things CTA.

Whether you're looking for news about public schools, learning about our positions and goals for the next election, or seeking to help advocate and take action for our students, you'll find what you need at cta.org.

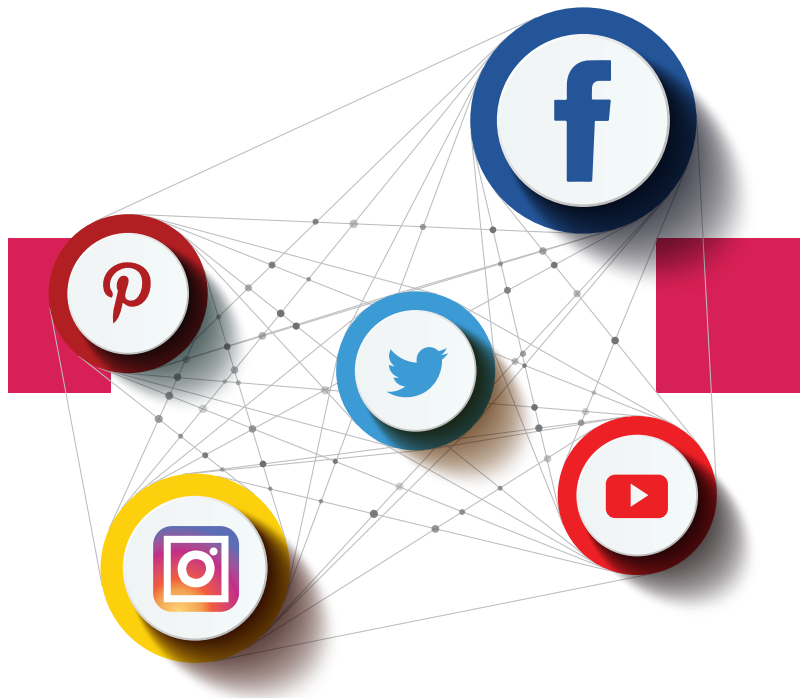
Visit CTA's main **Facebook page (@WeAreCTA)** and participate in more than 15 Facebook groups focused on a variety of education topics.

Follow breaking news that impacts CTA members and discussions about important education and social issues on CTA's **Twitter page (@WeAreCTA)**.

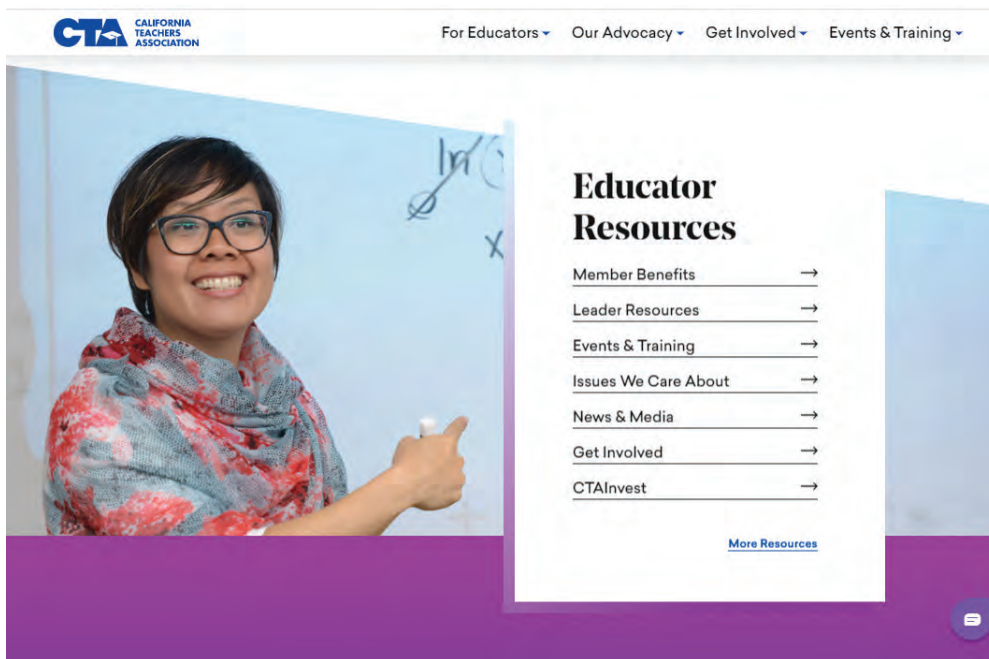
And don't miss our **Instagram stories and posts (@WeAreCTA)** sharing the beauty of our craft and our union, since we all know a picture is worth a thousand words.

Browse our **curated boards and pins on Pinterest (@WeAreCTA)** and get resources to use in the classroom and beyond.

On our **YouTube channel**, you can find dozens of IPD webinars and trainings on a variety of topics, in addition to CTA ads, videos of events, and other informative and interesting items.



LEARN MORE AT [CTA.ORG/SOCIAL](https://cta.org/social)



Staying connected to your profession and colleagues is important, and CTA's digital platforms make it possible. Like and follow us today and we'll see you online!

And if you need help while on cta.org, BUZZ, our answerbot, is here.

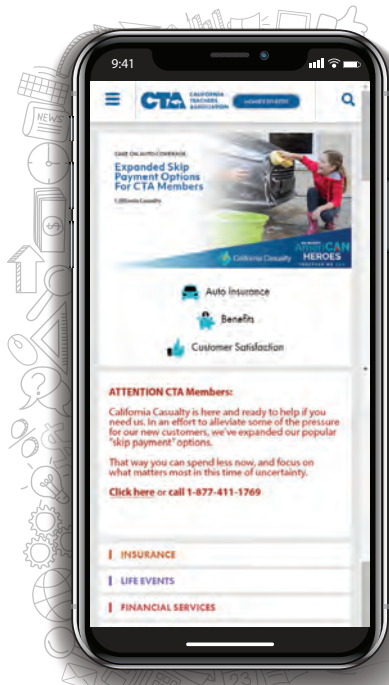
CTA/NEA Member Benefits

We stand union-strong with CTA's 310,000 and NEA's 3 million members to negotiate exclusive programs designed just for educators. Our programs can give you and your family peace of mind and add value to your membership.

SAVING YOU MONEY

UNIQUE BENEFITS AND SAVINGS

CTA/NEA Member Benefits programs are designed exclusively for educators. These quality programs offer competitive rates and excellent customer service, and have been vetted at the highest level with continued monitoring and advocacy. Whether you are trying to save money on your back-to-school supplies or looking for ways to protect yourself and your family with insurance solutions or your financial future with retirement savings, we have you covered. We and our endorsed partners are ready to help and support you with new virtual resources.



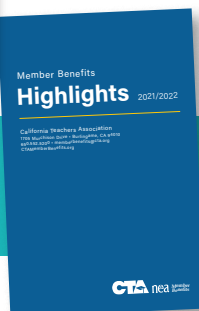
By combining the discounts from your CTA and NEA Member Benefits programs, you have a long list of programs and savings available to you.

A HANDFUL OF BENEFITS

For a complete list of the discounts and resources, visit our websites:

CTAMemberBenefits.org
neamb.com
CTAinvest.org

If you have any questions:
memberbenefits@cta.org
(650) 552-5200



Download the 2020-2021 Member Benefits Highlights for the complete program. CTAMemberBenefits.org/download

Benefits You Can Count On

CTA Access to Savings offers numerous discounts on everyday and major purchases, travel, and entertainment.

CTA Group Voluntary Life and Disability Plan through The Standard, protecting your loved ones and income with additional Student Loan and Cancer benefits.

Auto, Home/Renters Insurance through California Casualty offering preferred rates and unique educator-specific benefits.

Exclusive member discounts on home mortgages and auto loans through Provident Credit Union and a Super Reward Checking Account.

Student loan forgiveness resources, including NEA Student Loan Forgiveness Navigator powered by Savi.

AND DON'T MISS...

CTA Retirement Savings Plan, the only 403(b) plan endorsed by CTA and created using a fiduciary standard of care, which means it has your best interests in mind. More at CTAMemberBenefits.org/rsp.



EDUCATORS

Create Your Professional Growth Path

Choose from hundreds of convenient courses offered in various formats to enhance your teaching skills. Check out USD's featured courses below.

Transitioning To and From the Remote Classroom

UNITS: 3 | PRICE: \$489

Research has shown transition to a remote learning environment and back to a traditional classroom in a blended learning environment can be a challenge for educators of all levels and subject areas. In this course you will develop a deep understanding of how to transition to a remote learning environment and then back to a traditional classroom, but in a blended environment. Through digital media, online applications, activities, projects, research, readings, videos, and discussions, you will determine how you will make the transitions that best fit your students and your needs in both of the learning environments.

Google Tools for Collaborative Teaching

UNITS: 3 | PRICE: \$489

Technology is playing a major role in the world of education, now so more than ever. Whether you're an online teacher or are working in-person, being able to effectively utilize Google education tools can make all the difference for the success of you and your students. In this course, Google Tools for Collaborative Teaching, you will get an introduction to the most popular Google education tools, while designing lessons and units for students aligned with Common Core State Standards and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Technology Standards.

Teaching Positive Social Skills to Students

UNITS: 3 | PRICE: \$489

Studies indicate the development of social and emotional skills can positively affect student achievement and success in school and later in life. This course examines the research and best practices for teaching students positive social skills. Participants will develop a toolkit of resources for teaching and promoting the development of students' self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.

Engagement: Connecting Students to Content

UNITS: 3 | PRICE: \$489

How often do you hear students say, "When will I use this?" or "Why does this matter?" This course explores an instructional approach meant to engage students in a deep understanding of concepts. Supported by the framework, Teaching for a Robust Understanding (TRU), the course will examine the attributes that create opportunities for an environment where all students are actively engaged in becoming knowledgeable, flexible, and resourceful disciplinary learners.



View our course offerings now!

Visit [SanDiego.edu/EducatorsPrograms](https://www.sandiego.edu/EducatorsPrograms)

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



OUR PROMISE

**SUPPORT THOSE WHO
SUPPORT OUR CHILDREN**

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

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



**\$25
FREE
with Auto
Quote!**

And... for the opportunity to provide you a no-obligation quote, California Casualty will give you a **\$25 Amazon.com Gift Card** – **when quoted before April 30, 2021.**

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

**CALL TODAY FOR YOUR FREE,
NO-OBLIGATION QUOTE.**

1.866.268.1754

WeProtectEducators.com/CTA



California Casualty
AUTO AND HOME INSURANCE



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