

ERIC C. HEINS

CTA PRESIDENT

Believing in positive, teacher-driven change through collaboration and a student-centered focus on advocacy, CTA President Eric C. Heins has spent his professional life fighting at the local, state and national levels for the rights and dignity of all educators and the promise of the teaching profession.

He believes in connecting core union values with the power of the 325,000-member CTA gained through organizing, negotiating and advocating to create a stronger teaching profession and a stronger union. Over his 27-year California education career, he has been inspired by colleagues — paraprofessionals, librarians, counselors, nurses, music teachers, campus monitors and office staff — and their profound dedication to students.

“What excites me the most about taking on my role are the opportunities before me to give back to all those students and educators who have made an impact in my life,” Heins says of his optimism now at the start of his second term as president after serving as CTA vice president. “Working together with my fellow officers and colleagues, we will focus on what matters most, and that is ensuring that every student has the quality education they need and deserve, and that educators are working with parents and our communities to lead education change in California.”

Heins has taught kindergarten through fifth grade, including music, in the Pittsburg Unified School District in the Bay Area, and is a member of the Pittsburg Education Association. As the grievance chair for his chapter, which had rarely filed grievances, Heins handled nearly 100 by his second year.

While collaboration is always key, Heins also believes in reminding administrators that it is difficult to put students first at the district level if you’re always putting teachers last when it comes to resources and respect. He believes standardized testing is not learning, and that teachers should never be evaluated solely by test scores.

He’s very hopeful that California’s supportive governor and billions in new education funding will continue the path of healing that our schools are on. Heins vows that CTA will remain vigilant against attacks from wealthy, corporate-style reform forces that look at our schools as profit centers instead of community centers that can strengthen our cities.

He was elected vice president in 2011 directly from his position as a member of the CTA Board of Directors, where he served five years, representing thousands of educators and education support professionals in all of Contra Costa County and most of Alameda County.

He served on CTA’s Long-Term Strategic Planning Workgroup that developed a comprehensive strategy to move CTA forward around the goals of organizing, advocacy, community engagement and social justice.

His advocacy for at-risk students runs deep. He chaired the CTA Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) Workgroup, charged with monitoring the progress of the CTA-sponsored QEIA, the landmark 2006 reform law. This turnaround program, which ended June 30, 2015, provided nearly \$3 billion over eight years for proven intervention reforms at hundreds of schools of greatest need.

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Heins also chaired the pivotal CTA Teacher Evaluation Workgroup, which adopted new guidelines in 2011 stressing that reforms for teacher assessments must focus on strengthening the teaching profession and improving student learning, not punishing educators. He was also an active member of CTA's Elementary and Secondary Education Act Reauthorization Workgroup.

In addition, he represented local Bay Area teachers for six years as a California member of the National Education Association's Board of Directors. He is a past president of the Pittsburg Education Association and was bargaining chair for that chapter during its five-day strike in June 2000 over health benefits, salaries, and the district's refusing to provide benefits for domestic partners.

Active on many human rights issues, Heins was a cadre trainer for LGBT leadership training done by CTA, and the "Breaking the Silence" workshops. He chaired the CTA Diversity Committee and served on the union's Equity and Human Rights Conference Planning Committee.

He holds a bachelor's in music from Chapman College in Orange County. His master's in language and literacy education and his reading specialist credential are from the University of California Berkeley. Born in Amsterdam, he speaks fluent Dutch. Heins lives in Malibu with his husband, David.