

california
educator

**CALIFORNIA
DREAM
SCHOOL**

Learning based on
students' strengths

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PLUS

**SCHOOL
CLIMATE
CHANGE**

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improve learning

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LIFE OF A SOCIAL
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You're Invited!

**CTA'S ALL-MEMBER
TELEPHONE TOWN HALL
IS JANUARY 7**

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**CTA improves
400 schools**

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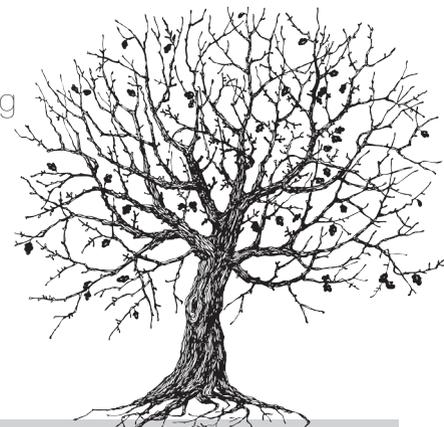
School climate change

School climate directly impacts achievement and behavior of students. It also impacts the motivation, productivity and job satisfaction of school employees. Learn from CTA chapters that have improved the local climate. It's not always easy and there will be bumps in the road. But ultimately, it improves learning and teaching.

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All in the family

Teaching is a craft that's passed down through the generations. It's the family business, if you will. Growing up in a family of educators makes teaching an inevitable career path, even if one tries other professions first. Some CTA members' teaching lineage goes way back. Read how their ancestry has influenced their lives today.



Megan Brown helps transform Gauer Elementary's school culture by building on students' strengths.



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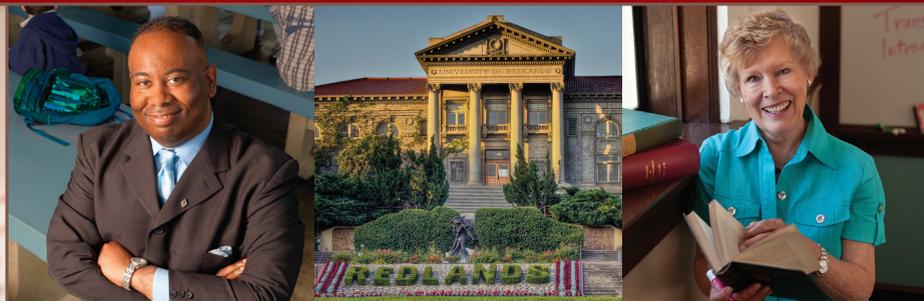
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At this holiday time, what do you wish for CTA's family and friends?

To our 325,000 members: I count among you teachers, counselors, school librarians, social workers, psychologists, nurses, full-time and part-time community college faculty, California State University faculty, education support professionals, Student CTA members, and retirees. Our numbers have certainly grown since CTA's founder, John Swett, convened 100 educators in 1863 to help establish free, publicly supported schools in California.

We could not have made the gains we did without you. We all worked hard to pass Proposition 30 last November to raise school funding in California by a projected \$47 billion over the next seven years. And you did that. When CTA called on you to write letters, you wrote letters. When CTA called on you to mobilize, you mobilized. And when CTA called on you to stand together and bring one unified voice to the forefront, well, you did that over and over again. Because you care so much for students and for our profession, you got out of your comfort zone and did scary things — all so students can learn and we can teach. We owe so much to those who went before us, and we count on each of you to pay it forward.

May your holiday season be restful and filled with the wonder to be found in family and friends.

To our chapter presidents: Thank you for your dedication and determined effort in support of your members each and every day. You are way too busy in your own jobs in your own schools, yet you still make time to attend school board meetings, speak out on behalf of your colleagues, help those who

have been wronged, share union news with your chapter, and help new members understand the value of the association. You are on the front lines every day, fighting for our members and advancing the cause of a quality public education.

During this holiday season, may you take time for your family, time for yourself, and time to recharge and regenerate.

To CTA staff: Thank you for your hard work, excellent planning, and thoughtful follow-up. The support you give to our members in the field and at the negotiating table, as legislative advocates and union activists, is as good as it gets. Because of your efforts, our members are routinely provided with expert advice, adequate training, and critical information about their rights as professionals. We flourish in our association work because you are so effective at doing yours.

For this holiday season, I hope you can keep your calendars clear of school board meetings, grievance hearings and unfair labor practices, at least until school is back in session.

To Superintendent Tom Torlakson: On behalf of our 325,000 members, thank you for your commitment to public schools and colleges, teachers and students. Under your leadership, California has begun to turn the corner. And we're showing the rest

of the nation that local educators, working collaboratively with appropriate stakeholder groups, can take bold steps to improve student learning. Your strong advocacy for increasing state resources in support of K-14 education has been an excellent model for all of us, and we truly appreciate and salute your efforts.

May you recharge your batteries over the holidays so that you come back in January, rested and ready to continue the steadfast, thoughtful leadership that has defined your tenure thus far.

To everyone who shares our goal of quality public schools for all: Enjoy your family and friends. We stand ready to work with you, and continue to advocate for California's students and educators.



Dean E. Vogel
CTA PRESIDENT



YOU'RE INVITED!

I'M EXCITED TO INVITE YOU to join us on January 7 for CTA's all-member Telephone Town Hall to discuss our Strategic Plan. This is your chance to ask questions about the plan and to hear what other CTA members and leaders have to say about the opportunities it presents. Find details on the next page.

Nearly two years ago, CTA began a long-term planning process to make our union better able to meet the many challenges facing public education today. The Strategic Plan, called "Our Union, Our Future," is based on input from thousands of CTA members. I know that the plan, up for approval by CTA State Council in late January, will lead to an even more effective and member-engaged CTA. You can learn more and download the plan at cta.org/ourfuture.

The Strategic Plan is an exciting and comprehensive road map for CTA's future. I believe it will help educators lead our profession, strengthen our locals, increase member engagement, have an even stronger voice, and create the best public education system for California students. I hope you will join us on the call.



Do you have an issue or topic you'd like Dean to address? Let us know. Email editor@cta.org.

ATTENTION CTA MEMBERS

*CTA is hosting
a telephone
town hall.*

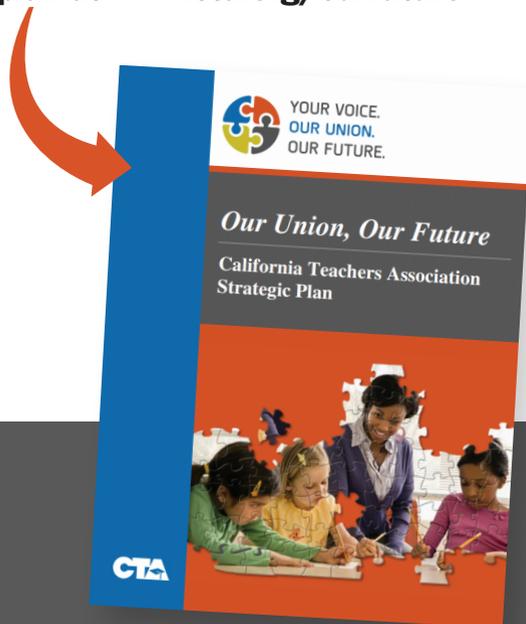
Be on the call to talk about our future.

On Tuesday, January 7, at 4:00 and 7:00 p.m.,
CTA will host statewide town halls to discuss and answer questions
about CTA's proposed Strategic Plan for the coming years.

Developed with input from thousands of CTA members, our strategic plan is **a road map
for CTA to ensure that we are leading the profession**, engaging our communities,
and working together so we can create the best public education system for all of
California's students. Learn more and **download the plan at www.cta.org/ourfuture.**



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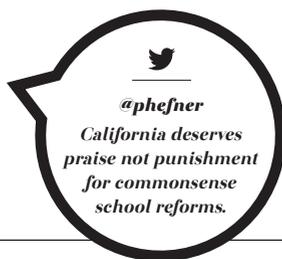
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Use this hashtag in your tweets and we'll select our favorites for each issue of the *California Educator*.



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Help Victims Become Survivors. This silent, one-minute video powerfully shows the important role educators play in the lives of abused students. HelpVictimsBecomeSurvivors.org

Most popular post



November 22 598 likes 168 shares

Favorite comments

John Shaban | November 22

I support classified employees, who are the unseen backbone of schools' infrastructure. As we navigate LCFF, let's not forget who keeps the classroom clean, warm, and well lit.

Cassandra Barron | November 18

Reward the behavior you do want to see, punish the behavior you do not wish to see (in that order). No learning can occur in a classroom that is not well managed.

John T. Green | November 20

There ought to be a state law mandating elementary counselors in every school so that every child receives the support they deserve!

More top tweets



@stevenmaviglio | November 13

Who's funding anti- [#CAPension](#) attacks? Hedge fund managers who'd profit if defined benefit plans end.



@AlexisPloss | November 18

I love my public schools because they are filled with caring and compassionate staff who help our children. [#aew2013](#)



@ratsmaths | November 19

A child never apologizes for a drawing they give you. We do. We become more concerned with failure as we get older. [#STEMCA13](#)

What's new at cta.org

1

cta.org

'Tis the season

With DonorsChoose, you can not only give this holiday season, you can ask for donations for school supplies and projects. Take a look at CTA's homepage for a link.

2

cta.org

'Tis the season (part 2)

CTA's homepage also shares a link to GiveForward, a fundraising website that helps you raise money to pay medical expenses for adults and children.

3

cta.org

Discounts for educators

Until Dec. 31, educators can get 20 percent discounts on school supplies through NEA Member Benefits and SmileMakers. Get details on CTA's webpage; use the promo code NEAMB.

4

cta.org/qa

School improvement At-risk students at over 400 schools have excelled under the CTA-backed Quality Education Investment Act. Discover what's working.

5

cta.org/iftgrantwinners

IFT grant recipients shine!

CTA's Institute for Teaching (IFT) Grant Program helps build schools and communities. Check out this year's recipients. Learn about the program at teacherdrivenchange.org.

DEPARTMENTS

Know & Tell

Know & Tell introduces useful and fun tips and provides the latest on scholarships, grants and resources.

Perspectives

Perspectives amplifies members' voices and includes the ever-popular Point/Counterpoint series, plus guest columns, and book and movie reviews.

Advocacy

Advocacy showcases the great work of CTA members in the bargaining, member rights and legislative arenas.

Learning

Learning highlights members' best practices and practical advice and showcases education trends.

CTA & You

CTA & You covers all things CTA, including events such as State Council, trainings and conferences, plus member benefits and services.

Two fonts walk into a bar...

The bartender says, "We don't serve your type here."

I love humor. Highbrow, lowbrow, hyperbolic, witty, self-deprecating, laugh-at-life, and yes, even bathroom humor. I'm not much into humor at others' expense, but slapstick comedy? *Absolutely*. Laughter is infectious. It's good for you, too, as an antidote to stress, pain and conflict. I think that'll be my New Year's resolution — more humor. I'm starting early by reading how educators use humor in the classroom (page 19) to help students learn.

Topics inside this magazine to make you beam include the smartphone apps for educators (page 14) and the moving documentary about a day in the life of the Pasadena school district (page 24). And smile with pride reading about the gratifying success and enhanced learning occurring at 400 schools supported by the Quality Education Investment Act (page 50). CTA is the reason for that school improvement.

CTA is also the reason for the "Dream School" (page 38), a model for changing school culture by building on students' strengths. Anaheim Elementary Education Association members helped make it possible with a grant from CTA's Institute for Teaching.

Would you like to know more about CTA's plans for the future? CTA has developed a long-term strategic plan to meet the many challenges facing public education. You're invited to participate in a January 7 Telephone Town Hall to discuss the plan and learn about the opportunities it presents. Find details on page 5.

We like to profile CTA's amazing members, and this month is no different. See what a San Francisco school social worker's day involves (page 42), and meet the Student CTA president who is, well, different. Smart and proactive, to

be sure, and not what I expected (page 23). And if you haven't met Assembly Member Susan Bonilla (page 30), you are missing something. She is one of a growing number of educators who serve in the California Legislature.

In the advocacy arena, read about corporations funding PR campaigns and litigation attacking your due process protections (page 36). CTA is standing up for your rights, of course. Stalwart members in Alpine, Denair, Yuba City and Woodland are fighting for professional contracts at the bargaining table and on the streets (page 34). And see how community college adjunct faculty are demanding equity on page 32.

Now, I believe teaching is the grandparent of all professions and (as you'll see on page 10) a family business. Enjoy reading about families with generations of teachers as you prepare for the holidays. For me, that means thinking up entertaining "groaners" for my relatives. Personally, I avoid clichés like the plague.

Cynthia Menzel
EDITOR IN CHIEF
editor@cta.org

Read about the rest of the story online!

Read behind-the-scenes stories in the *California Educator* at blog.cta.org, and see additional photos from stories in this magazine at cta.org/educator.

YOUR OPINIONS AND LETTERS ARE WELCOME! There is a 250-word limit, and all letters will be edited. If you send photos or other materials, identifications and permissions are required. Letters must include your name along with your address, daytime telephone number or email address. Email editor@cta.org.



Sub pay is abysmal

Your article on substitute teachers (October) was spot-on.

I am retired and enjoy subbing. Teachers generally leave good plans enabling me to manage a class in any subject regardless of my personal strength in the discipline. I find the increased use of subs as classified staff and the abysmal compensation problematic. This is not a teacher problem; it is an administrative problem. By using subs this way, administrators are actually eliminating classified jobs.

I teach in several local districts where salaries have not been raised in at least 10 years. Discounting a half hour for lunch, sub pay is \$15 to \$20 per hour. It's sad that districts demand professional standards, yet compensate as if subs were day labor.

CAROL CAMPBELL

United Educators of San Francisco (retired)

About Diane Ravitch

Thanks for highlighting Diane Ravitch's work, which provides an important perspective on policies that are producing so much stress, and for helping us see that what we do is appreciated.

MOLLY BISHOP

Rohnert Park-Cotati Educators Association

Baseline testing in Santa Rosa

I read your article regarding concussions (October) with great interest. However, when I got to page 15, I read that Santa Rosa City School District has not implemented baseline testing. I am the athletic director for Piner High School, in the Santa Rosa City School District.

We started baseline concussion screening of all our football players and all soccer players (both men and women) this year. The first group we did in conjunction with Santa Rosa Junior College, Santa Rosa Sports Medicine, and a local consortium of physicians. As

a district, we recognize the importance of not only screening athletes, but of educating them to the signs, symptoms and treatment of concussions. We have a one-hour educational component that both students and coaches must attend before they take the screening.

If an athlete gets a concussion, we provide a post-injury screening. At that time, both the baseline and post-injury screenings are printed out and given to the athlete so they can take it to their doctor. No athlete is allowed back on the field without a doctor's note clearing them for practice/play.

I look forward to a parent component of this education. Until then, we will continue to educate and baseline athletes.

TRISH DELZELL

Santa Rosa Teachers Association

Editor's note: There was no testing at publication time, according to the Santa Rosa Press Democrat newspaper.

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A teaching family: **Robert “Bobby” Taylor, Ollie Prax-Lodge, Robert “Bob” Taylor, and Robin Taylor.**

Robin Taylor

ELK GROVE
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MY DAD WAS my Spanish teacher in high school. I tried to keep it a secret from my peers. One day a substitute asked how it felt to have my dad as a teacher, and all the kids turned around to look at me. I was mortified. After that moment I was fine, because I admired my dad and knew how much of a difference he made.

I come from a long line of teachers. My great-grandmother was a beloved public school teacher in Ukiah. Mamie Taylor raised two sons, one of whom was my grandfather, John Taylor, who became Mendocino County superintendent of schools. He had two sons, one of whom is my father, who became a high school Spanish teacher



All in the family

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

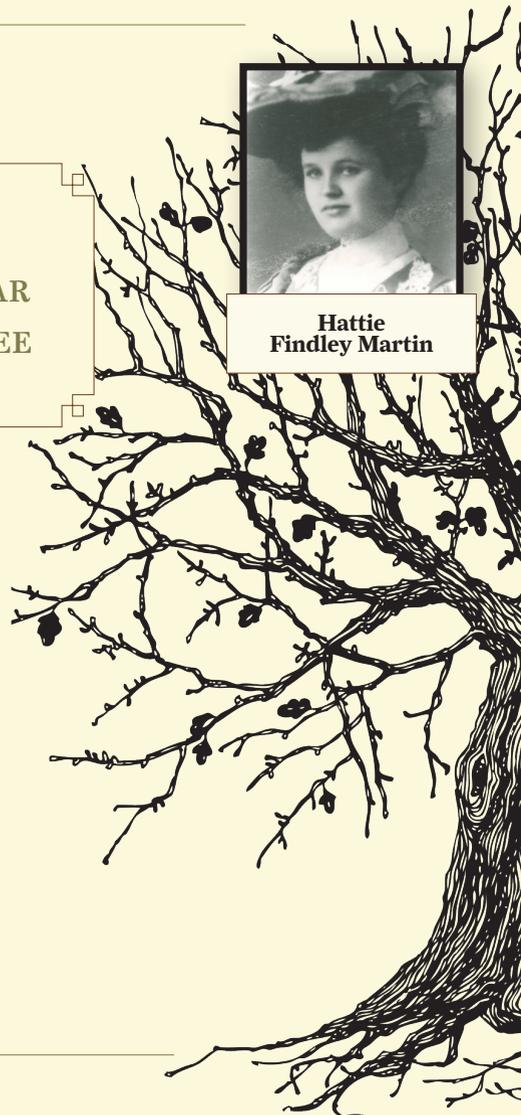
IT’S THE FAMILY BUSINESS. It’s a craft that’s passed down through the generations. It’s growing up in a family of educators, so teaching is “in the blood” and an inevitable career path, even if one tries other professions first.

We found some CTA members whose teaching lineage goes way back. In their own words, they tell how their ancestry has influenced their lives today.

TEACHERS
DON’T FALL FAR
FROM THE TREE



**Hattie
Findley Martin**





at the same high school in which his grandmother taught and where he attended high school.

My father, Robert Taylor, was respected and loved by his students. He was Teacher of the Year several times. As a testament to the influence he had on his students, several of them became Spanish teachers, and cite him as an inspiration. In fact, the current Ukiah High School Spanish department boasts four of his former students.

My father retired in 2006. It was the same year my brother (also Robert Taylor) finished up his first year teaching Spanish at Elk Grove High School. Ukiah High School conducted an exhaustive search for a new Spanish teacher to replace my father. They couldn't find the right candidate until they interviewed my brother. One Robert Taylor replaced the other. Students were confused when they received their fall schedules; they still had Robert Taylor for Spanish and were very surprised to see a young version of their previous teacher.



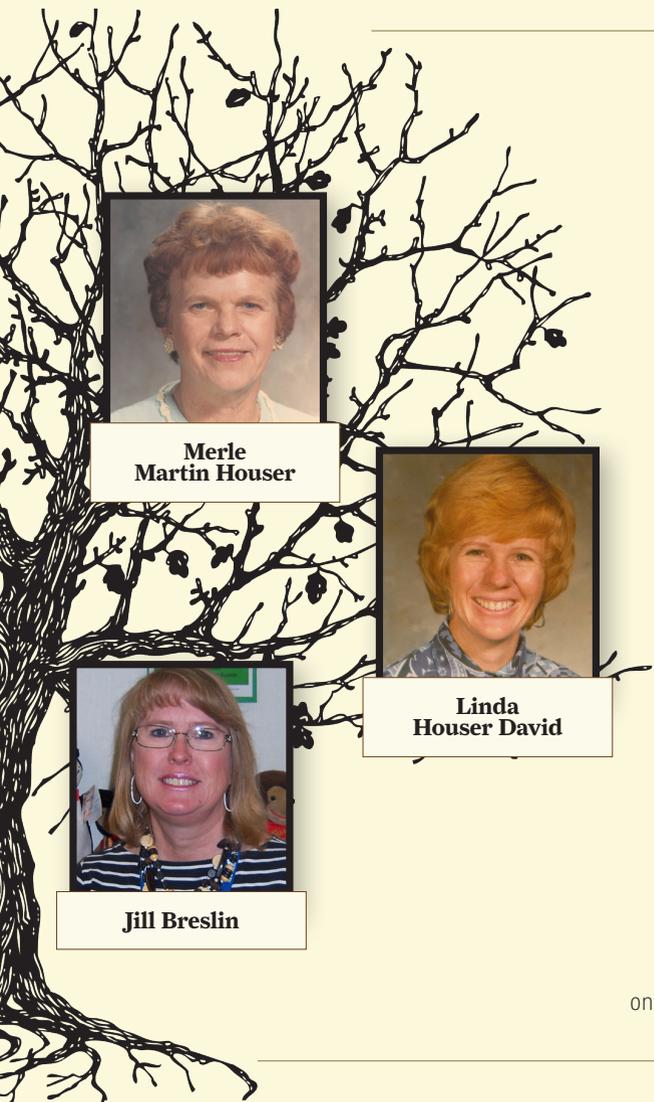
John W. Taylor



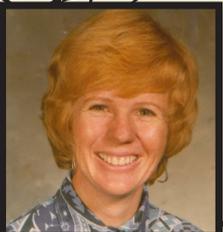
Mamie Taylor

My brother has taught Spanish in Ukiah for seven years. He met his wife there; she is also a Spanish teacher and former student of my father's. Both belong to the Ukiah Teachers Association. My mother (Emiko Taylor) was a teacher's aide in the elementary school system in Ukiah and came from a long line of educators in Japan.

I have taught elementary school in Elk Grove since 2003. I am proud to carry on the family tradition. I choose to be called Mrs. Taylor by students (instead of my husband's last name) to honor the heritage of my family and also to honor my great-grandmother, the original Mrs. Taylor.



**Merle
Martin Houser**



**Linda
Houser David**



Jill Breslin

Jill Breslin
SHASTA UNIFIED
ELEMENTARY ASSOCIATION

GROWING UP IN a family of teachers was fun. They talked about what happened in their classrooms. They shared happiness if one of their students made progress. They shared lesson plans, activities and stories.

My great-grandmother, Hattie Findley, was a teacher. She graduated from San Francisco State Teachers College in 1899. My grandmother gave me her graduation bracelet when I graduated from Chico State in 1988. My great-grandmother worked in San Luis Obispo in 1904 at the primary school.

Hattie married Ward Martin, and they had five children including Merle, my grandmother, who became a teacher. She graduated from San Jose State, where she met my grandfather, Harold Houser, who also became a teacher. They moved to Grass Valley. Grandma taught English and art, and Granddad taught shop and was the football coach and later became the principal. The football field is named after him.

Merle and Harold had three children; two of them became teachers. One of them is my mother, Linda Houser, who taught elementary school in the San Juan Unified School District until she retired. Her first teaching job was at Antelope School in Red Bluff, and she was only 20 when she was hired. The first time staff went out for TGIF, she couldn't join them because she wasn't 21. My uncle Harold Houser Jr., known as Skip, taught in Grass Valley for many years and became the superintendent of schools for Nevada County.

My father, Dave David, is also a teacher. He and my mom met at Chico State University, and he taught elementary school in Rio Linda Unified School District.

Then there's me. I have been teaching at Shasta Elementary School for 25 years. I have two boys. They are going into petroleum engineering. But who knows? Perhaps one of their children may become a teacher one day.

Karen Sturlaugson, third grade teacher at E. Neal Roberts Elementary in San Bernardino City USD, **Kate Sumner**, special education student teacher at Mariposa Elementary in Redlands USD, and **Marcia Pifer**, retired reading specialist from Colton JUSD.



Janelle Williams and family

SAN BERNARDINO TEACHERS ASSOCIATION



JANELLE: Education is our family business because we're all very caring people. We like working with kids and seeing them grow in their abilities. We talk education all the time. We pass tips, advice and strategies and support each other. I think we pass around lessons, too. Lifelong learning runs in the family; we all have master's degrees.

I was actually a business major in college. I began working at a savings and loan in the training department. I enjoyed training people for their new jobs. And that led me into teaching. You try to fight it, but you can't, because teaching is fun.

I earned my bachelor's degree from San Diego State University, then went to Cal Poly Pomona and got my master's in educational technology. I taught business and computer classes for 26 years in Alhambra and also in San Bernardino. I earned my master's in counseling from Azusa University. I'd undergone a medical problem and was in the hospital for a long time. I realized people need a deeper understanding of the personal problems students face in school and in life. Being a counselor is rewarding because you know kids on a personal level and can help them with their problems. I'm now a counselor at Ramona Alessandro Elementary School in San Bernardino.

MARCIA PIFER, Janelle's mother: My mother-in-law had several sisters who were teachers. It seemed natural to go into teaching. I received my bachelor's degree from Cal Poly Pomona and earned a master's degree in education with an emphasis on reading in 1985. I taught kindergarten and then first grade, becoming a reading

specialist in the Colton Unified School District, where I taught from 1980 to 1999. I liked everything about it. I'm retired now, but help my daughter Karen in her classroom. I go almost every day. As a volunteer, I experience the joy without the stress.

KAREN STURLAUGSON, Janelle's sister: Mother loved to go work every day, and I knew that was the career I wanted, too. I teach third grade at Roberts Elementary School in San Bernardino. I received my credential in 1986 from Cal State San Bernardino and also have a master's degree from Chapman University in reading instruction. I've been an elementary school teacher 26 years. I have two daughters; the oldest is in the student teaching program through University of Redlands.

KATE SUMNER, Karen's daughter: I earned my bachelor's degree in communicative disorders and wanted to be a speech-language pathologist. I wanted to stay away from teaching. Then I changed my mind. I spent a lot of time going to Mom's schools since first grade and got used to being at a school and seeing her teach. I knew it was a good way to help kids. I am now student-teaching at Mariposa Elementary in Redlands. I like it a lot.

JANELLE: My kids, Doug and Sarah, are in college. I'm not sure whether they'll go into teaching.

MARCIA: We might have more teachers in the family. Doug has always wanted to be a PE teacher. And Sarah looks like she'll make a good English teacher someday.

Know & Tell

Grants, awards, contests, resources and tips to share

**Pug in
a blanket?**



Puns: Kids love them, and they engage abstract thinking.

Idioms: English learners benefit, as do primary English speakers.

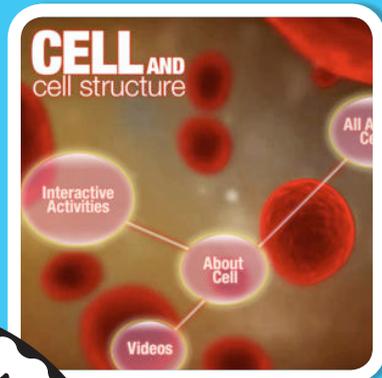
Similes: Wacky comparisons help teach that figure of speech and reinforce learning.

OCEAN VIEW TEACHERS ASSOCIATION'S **DAVID SINGER** IS ONE OF THE CTA MEMBERS WHO SHARE HOW USING HUMOR ENGAGES STUDENTS AND ACTIVATES LEARNING. TURN TO PAGE 19 FOR A SMILE AND MAYBE A NEW IDEA.



CELL AND CELL STRUCTURE

Get to know all about cells, their structure and functions with detailed 2-D and 3-D imagery. Perfect for middle school biology. **Cost: \$2.99**



DRAGONBOX ALGEBRA 12+

An inexpensive algebra tutor that covers curriculum from late primary to early high school. **Cost: \$9.99**



LEARN SPANISH BY MINDSNACKS

Learn to speak and read Spanish by playing nine addictive games designed for essential vocabulary and conversation skills. **Cost: Free**



iPad apps for every educator

BY TERRY NG

STUDENTS AND SCHOOLS across the country are using iPads, and above is a list of free and low-cost educational apps that you can start using in your classroom today or recommend to parents for use at home. Included are tools for the classroom and apps to help increase engagement with students. Need more? The Apple App Store features over 40,000 education apps for iPad. Learn more at www.apple.com/education.



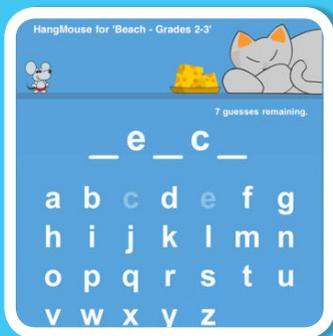
EDMODO

Provides a safe, easy way for teachers and students to engage and collaborate for free, anytime, anywhere. Teachers can post messages, discuss classroom topics, assign and grade classwork, and share content and materials. **Cost: Free**



READING RAINBOW

A trusted library of books and exciting video field trips. New books and videos are added every week, expanding the collection. Includes a reward program to motivate reading. **Cost: Free**



SPELLINGCITY

A fun way to learn spelling and vocabulary words by playing a variety of learning games. **Cost: Free**



PAPER

Lets students instantly capture ideas as sketches, diagrams, illustrations, notes or drawings in a simple interface. **Cost: Free**

Did you know?

IF YOU DISCOVER research you think we should highlight, send it along with your name and local chapter to editor@cta.org.

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

A new study has linked computer usage and social media — tweeting, texting, smartphones and laptops — with violence, cyberbullying, school woes, obesity, lack of sleep and other problems. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting children's use of the Internet for entertainment, including Facebook, TV and movies, to two hours per day. Online homework is an exception.

Also related to cyberbullying: Gov. Jerry Brown signed AB 256, allowing schools to take disciplinary action for cyberbullying whether it occurs on or off the campus. The law applies to emails, texts and social media, and goes into effect this January.

THREE WARNING SIGNS A CHILD IS BEING CYBERBULLIED:

- 1 A child becomes sad, depressed, angry, withdrawn or anxious after looking at a computer or cellphone.
- 2 A student withdraws from friends, family and activities they previously enjoyed.
- 3 A child refuses to go to school, experiences a drop in grades, and avoids group activities. Check out NEA's Health Information Network (neahin.org) for resources to identify and prevent cyberbullying.

Children who are spanked in early childhood are more likely to be aggressive as older children, but they are also more likely to do worse on vocabulary tests than their peers who have not been spanked, according to researchers at Columbia University who analyzed data from more than 1,500 families. While several studies have found a connection between spanking and aggressive behaviors, **the finding that spanking can be linked to cognitive ability is somewhat new.**

While most public school districts have weathered the rise of charter schools without a negative fiscal impact, certain risk factors are making it harder for districts in economically challenged areas to remain financially viable as charters continue to grow, says a recent report from Moody's Investors Service. When declining enrollment happens, school districts cut back services, making charters look more appealing, which causes a further population drop. And **making cuts can be more difficult because charter schools pull students from a variety of grade levels across a district,** so it is challenging for district officials to make strategic decisions to cut back on expenses, such as consolidating classrooms or schools.

More schools are giving parents almost instant access to their students' grades and assignments online, allowing them to put their students' classwork under daily scrutiny. But **teachers and child psychology experts say parents should try to keep a balance between getting involved and becoming "helicopter parents"** who control their kids' academic lives so closely that they struggle to develop independence. "Teacher websites and online grade reports can be wonderful tools to help parents be engaged with their child's school," says Jennifer Shroff Pendley, Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Del. "However, these same tools can lead to parental overinvolvement or helicoptering."



Thousands of California students in foster care are suffering from an "invisible achievement gap," with worse academic performance, a higher dropout rate, and placement in more failing schools than their statewide peers, according to a new study by the Stuart Foundation. The experiences they've had — **abuse, neglect, moving from home to home — are having an impact on their ability to academically achieve.** The youths switched schools more often than other students (each transfer can set a student back as many as six months, research shows) and suffered far greater levels of emotional trauma than their peers. Such factors, researchers say, are key reasons why they performed worse in English, math and the high school exit exam than even low-income students overall.



*The
Numbers*

31

MINUTES

The amount of extra sleep, on average, that patients with neuromuscular diseases enjoyed while taking part in a therapy involving listing the things they were grateful for, according to gratitude researchers at UC Davis and the University of Miami.

34th

PLACE

California's ranking on the new national "Opportunity Index," which measures the upward mobility chances for children and all Americans, state by state. Education, economic and community data are used. The full index, created by a bipartisan advocacy group, is at www.opportunitynation.org.

58

PERCENT

Jerry Brown's approval rate among registered voters, his highest of his third term as governor.

2 BILLION

DOLLARS

Amount spent since 2008 by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on its nationwide "teacher quality" agenda, with \$696 million going to teacher-related programs, according to an *Education Week* analysis. Grants also went to the nonprofit corporation that publishes the newspaper.

Quotes & Numbers

 **WE COMB THE MEDIA DAILY** for the best quotes and statistics about public education. If you discover a quote or stat you think we should highlight, send it along with your name to editor@cta.org.

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
—Former South Africa president and Nobel Peace Prize recipient **NELSON MANDELA**, who died peacefully Dec. 5. He was 95.

"To inspire hope, you have to have hope yourself."

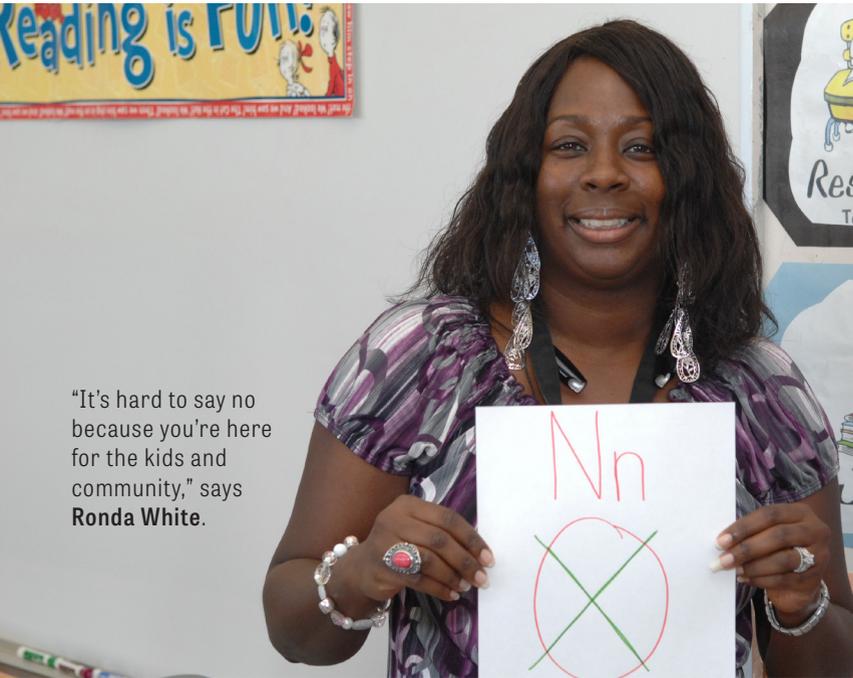
—California labor organizer **FRED ROSS SR.**, credited with mentoring acclaimed labor leader César Chávez.

"It doesn't really surprise me. They came into my class knowing more about computer science than I did."

—Proud Monta Vista High School teacher **SCOTT DERUITER** in Silicon Valley, quoted in a news story about three of his students being among only 19 students in the world to earn perfect scores on their AP computer science exams this year.

"Clearly, this finding means we have our work cut out for us in the upcoming months as we all to try to achieve widespread awareness about the new LCFF and the opportunities and necessity for parents to be engaged."

—California State PTA President **COLLEEN A.R. YOU**, reacting to a statewide EdSource survey about the new Local Control Funding Formula. Fifty-seven percent had never heard of the LCFF, which encourages parent input about school district spending decisions. A majority graded their children's schools with an A or B, and reported "high levels of communication with them."



"It's hard to say no because you're here for the kids and community," says Ronda White.

More and more is being expected from school employees these days. As schools transition to the Common Core State Standards, there are more professional development workshops, committees to serve on and lessons to plan. All of these things can add hours to the work day.

But sometimes, you have to draw the line, CTA members say.

"For the last several years, we have been asked to do more and more in the way of paperwork," says Pye Cornejo, a teacher at Collett Elementary School and Alford Educators Association member. "We have seen exploding class sizes and have bitten the bullet, accepting pay cut after pay cut. Through it all, we have leaned into the yoke, pulling ourselves, our colleagues and our students along, all the while wearing ourselves down even more. I see my colleagues walking around looking exhausted after only four weeks of school. I see them continually sick. So yes, there are indeed times when you have to say no."

IS BEING A 'YES' MAN OR WOMAN HEALTHY?

As demands increase, sometimes educators should just say no

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

Your principal requests that you join a new committee at your school.

Your assistant principal asks if you would "mind" taking over yard duty for a few months.

A colleague pleads with you to sponsor a new club you'd be "perfect" for.

● **THE LIST OF EXTRA THINGS** to do goes on and on. For an educator, it's practically a reflex to blurt out "yes" to all of these things — when you would prefer saying no to some of them.

But it can be *hard* to say no

It sounds easy to say no (2-year-olds say it all the time), but for an adult, it's tricky. Uttering the word "no" can be downright uncomfortable, even when you have good reasons.

"You want to do all these things and be at all these events," says Ronda White, literacy specialist at Brentwood Oak Elementary School in East Palo Alto. "But you may have a family at home. Or you may commute 30 to 50 minutes a day, and staying later at school means terrible traffic. You might be one of the many teachers who have a second job or are working on a master's degree. It's hard to say no because you're here for the kids and community. You want to be part of what's going on."

Educators feel obligated to say yes even when they have a lot on their "supersized" plates, says Jim Remington, a math and science teacher at Bowditch Middle School in Foster City.

"Let's face it — saying no is difficult. It seems to imply negativity, and humans have a desire to be happy and positive. The word 'yes' is a happy word. When you say yes to someone they smile. Everyone is happy. Well, maybe not everyone. Perhaps you've said yes to someone — and you were not happy about it at all."

Classified employees have an especially hard time saying no, says Duval "Sam" Phillips, maintenance worker and president of the Potter Valley ESP chapter.

"We are part of the community here, and our children and sometimes grandchildren have gone to school here, so there's an obligation a lot of



Duval "Sam" Phillips

the time to do what you can. I say yes all the time. I think I can save the world sometimes, so I help kids after school, sponsor the multicultural club, and help in an after-school program called Kudos that provides supervision and homework help. It's for the kids, so I'm a yes man. I help everybody else. But when it comes to me, I'm not a very good advocate. There are times when I should say no, but I don't."

Of course, there are times when you should unequivocally say yes.

"You should say yes when you agree with your whole heart that it will be an important and enjoyable task and see the benefits of saying yes, so you approach it with all your energy," says Remington.

Before saying no, make sure you are fulfilling your contract obligations, advises White, Ravenswood Teachers Association co-vice president. When in doubt, check with chapter leaders, she suggests. Some things, such as professional development workshops that take place during the workday, may be mandatory, while events that take place after school and during the weekends may be optional. Administrators, who don't want to spend money hiring subs, may act as though professional development workshops during off hours are mandatory when in fact they are not. Just say, "Let me get back to you on that," and consult your contract or chapter president before saying no.

How to say no

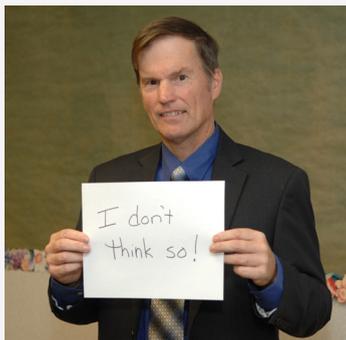
"I already have too much on my plate."

"I'd like to, but I can't because..."

"You probably should find someone else who can bring more expertise to this project."

There are ways to say no — and ways to say no without really saying no, says Remington, who says he has no guilt about putting himself first.

One way to avoid having to say no is to volunteer for something you like to do before you are asked to do something you'd rather not. It's better to serve on committees or work on events that you enjoy, and volunteering for these things in advance can head off a request for something you abhor. White, for example, always volunteers for Family Literacy Night and



Instead of feeling bad, feel good that you have more time to devote to what you want to do, not what someone else expects you to do.

JIM REMINGTON

organizing the Science Fair because she enjoys these things — making it easier to turn down other requests.

Sometimes it's best to delay your answer. If asked without warning by your principal to serve on a committee, for example, it's best to listen and get all the facts. For example, will you be compensated, how much prep time is expected, and when will meetings be held and where? Explain that you need a day or two to consider it. Then talk to other staff about the work involved. If it doesn't appeal to you, ask about other committees or projects that need volunteers. You can decline the task you've been asked to do and volunteer for another, says Remington.

Of course, there are times when you must say no to something without saying yes to something else. Say it simply, plainly and tactfully. Provide a reason, such as lack of interest, lack of time or lack of expertise. Stand your ground firmly. "I must bow out" and "I regret that I must decline" are good phrases.

Cornejo has no problem telling administrators no because she has "too much on her plate." She believes when educators say no more often, expectations become more reasonable, and "we can do our jobs to the best of our abilities."

"I am simply saying do the best that you can and leave the rest to tomorrow. Is it worth your health? Is it worth your mental well-being? Is it worth the time lost from your families, the stress and the demoralization? The answer to these questions is no, and it's time for us to start using that word."

Once you've said no, don't feel bad, Remington advises.

"Remember, it's not personal, it's business. Instead of feeling bad, feel good that you have more time to devote to what you want to do, not what someone else expects you to do. The person who's asking you to do something has someone else in mind as a backup. If you tell them no, it's not the end of the world. They will simply move on to the next person."



Pye Cornejo

In my seventh- and eighth-grade beginning and advanced art classroom, we recognized the incredible humor of the Pop Art movement, which frequently included oversized images of cartoons (Lichtenstein), giant spoons, clothespins (Oldenburg), and garish portraits of celebrities (Warhol). And then, of course, there were the surrealists! — **JOHN HOUCHIN**, President, Santa Barbara Teachers Association

I ask that students who want extra credit tell the class a joke. One joke a week. Can't be racist, sexist, or "dead baby" jokes. Should not be pilfered from a third-grader. Must be handed in, but in handwriting, not a computer printout. This gives kids the opportunity to speak before class in a relatively nonthreatening mode, and usually starts class on a positive note.

— **DENNIS KELLY**, President, United Educators of San Francisco

We are studying genetics in my science class. To help seventh-graders deal with gametes (egg and sperm) and fertilization, I use props. I have a toy egg and sperm. They love them (especially when I ask "who has my sperm"). GIANTmicrobes (giantmicrobes.com/us) makes stuffed animals that look like common microbes.

— **KAROLEE J. SMILEY**, Twin Rivers United Educators

Elementary school, grades 4-5. There has to be laughter every day in a classroom. I have a riddle a day that students can write the answer to for a sticker at the end of the day. Solving riddles definitely takes higher order thinking skills and thinking outside the box. Sometimes there are groans mixed with the laughter.

— **TRISH GORHAM**, Oakland Education Association

Comic strips.
Not just funny ones,
but many times those
with a touch of social
conscience.
Kids love it.

— **DAVID CUESTAS**

Palmdale Elementary Teachers Association

DRY HUMOR: IQ check!

PUNS: Kids love them, and they engage abstract thinking.

SPOONERISMS: Are they peally raying attention?

IDIOMS: English learners benefit, as do primary English speakers.

SIMILES: Wacky comparisons help teach that figure of speech and reinforce learning.

HINK PINKS: Rhyming riddles teach synonyms and can be very funny.

— **DAVID SINGER**, Ocean View Teachers Association

I use puns in my seventh-grade honors life science classroom. It helps to keep things lighthearted, and it helps with listening skills and critical thinking. For example, I recently asked students to draw a leaf to help illustrate the photosynthetic reaction, and I told them that high-quality drawings of this sort are "never in vain" — a pun on the veins that appear in many different species of plants. I usually first get a smirk, and then, after a brief pause, laughter is the reward. I believe laughter is an important part of creating a positive learning environment for my students.

— **GREG BONACCORSI**, Fremont Unified District Teachers Association

I try to find funny sayings, pictures or funnies to make students laugh as they enter the room. It sets the mood, makes them laugh, and we may or may not have an impromptu conversation about it. Sometimes they actually have to THINK about them! The kids love it. Some actually send me new ones to use — even the school secretaries!

— **DAVE RODGERS**, Visalia Teachers Association

USING HUMOR IN THE CLASSROOM

BEYOND THE FUN FACTOR, humor can be an effective way to engage students and activate learning. We asked members about how they use humor in the classroom. Read what they had to say.

READ MORE ON PAGE 20. >>



To do gentle discipline.

— **WHITNEY WEDDELL**,
Kern High School
Teachers Association



I use humor to diffuse tension.

— **JANEL Y. CHRISTIANSEN**,
Yucaipa-Calimesa Educators

I use humor to help students remember difficult grammar concepts in French. For example: Pronunciation in languages is very important for clear communication. A slight change in vowel pronunciation or dropping a consonant sound can result in hilarity or trouble. It can be the difference between calling someone a pig or inviting them to bed you. True story.

— **SAMANTHA CARR**, El Monte Union Education Association

I have a joke of the day posted on a large portable whiteboard as students enter our room. Although my humor is silly, students from all over campus stop by to read the jokes. The janitor says my jokes are the highlight of her day! — **LISA BECKER**, Orland Teachers Association

I try and model that it's OK to laugh at yourself, especially when trying something new. I teach ceramics. Pottery can be funny business!

— **ERINA HIGA**, Rialto Education Association

My middle school students love hearing about '80s songs and laugh when we sing them together. — **JASON BRONSTEIN**, Desert Sands Teachers Association

I have all sorts of crazy dances to help kids remember concepts. Funny thing is, I am pretty bad at dancing. — **VICKIE BOUCHER**, Fontana Teachers Association

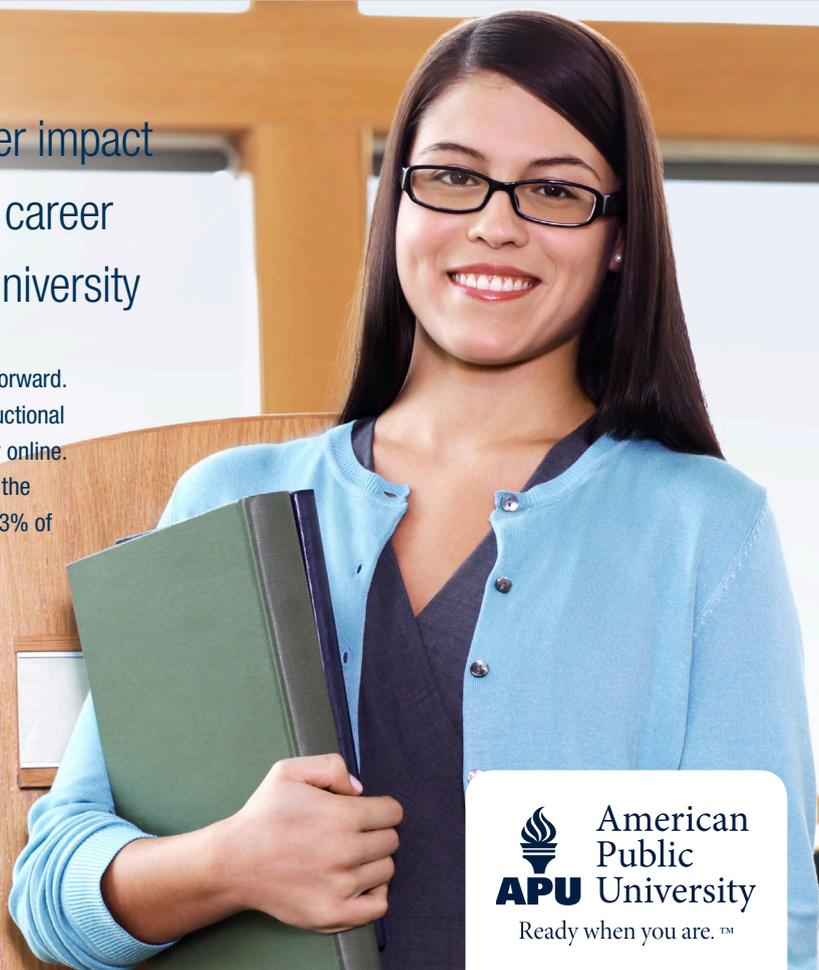
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When you're ready to advance your career
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Perspectives

Members' opinions and practical advice, plus guest columns and reviews



Go Public shows us what makes public schools tick — the people — and reminds us that despite challenges, there's a great deal to celebrate and treasure in our schools.

THIS PHOTO CAPTURES A SCENE FROM THE MOVIE FEATURING JODIE WEST, UNITED TEACHERS OF PASADENA. READ THE REVIEW OF A PROJECT THAT INVOLVED 50 FILMMAKERS, 50 SUBJECTS, 28 SCHOOLS AND ONE DAY ON PAGE 24.



To give or to get?

Is it fair to expect parents to donate money to schools?

NO

Parents in more affluent school districts should not be asked or expected to donate money to their neighborhood public schools. As a parent who lives in such a district, I feel pressure to pay for school supplies, field trips and assemblies that should be paid for by the school. While I live in a more affluent neighborhood, this does not mean that my neighbors and I are wealthy. Many of us live within a budget so that we can afford to raise our children in an area that is safe and family-friendly.

A public school paid for by our tax dollars should provide the supplies our students need. Last year, I was asked to “donate” money for assemblies, field trips (one costing over \$30), and supplies for art projects. The pressure on the parents is that if you do not donate, these things will be eliminated, and no one wants to be “that parent” or have “that child” who caused every other child to miss out. This can be especially difficult for families with two or more children.

I am also a teacher. I teach in a Title I school that has a high level of poverty. I cannot ask my students’ parents for these types of donations because most of them cannot afford it. So where are the field trips, assemblies, and supplies for art projects for my students?

If we as a society are going to base teacher effectiveness on test scores, we need to be on an equal playing field. Yes, my school receives more funding; however, this money goes to curriculum resources such as ELD (English language development) or intervention programs and additional support staff. It does not provide my students with assemblies or field trips. Supplies are provided to my students through the school district; it is part of our budget, as it should be.

As long as we as a society believe that all children should be receiving a fair and equitable education, then our taxes should be paying for that education. Students who live in poverty are already at a disadvantage. It is unfair to continue that disadvantage through our public school system.

Many schools expect parents to donate money. Some members think that’s fine. Others do not.

Read what two members have to say.

YES

When parents donate to schools, it enriches kids’ academic experience and helps create incredibly well-rounded children. In our community, parents feel good about giving money. They know it’s spent wisely on various enrichment activities that benefit their kids, such as a Gold Rush field trip to Columbia, assemblies with the Lawrence Hall of Science, poetry classes and musical theater. We have never turned down a kid or told them they can’t go on a field trip because their parents can’t afford to pay. We always find a way for them to go. And we are very discreet.

We have a foundation called Brisbane Educational Support Team (BEST) Parent Teacher Organization. This year they received \$33,000 in pledges, with families donating an average of \$244. Thanks to the generosity of the community, we can keep the unfunded and underfunded programs that students love, such as music and art. One goal this year, as in previous years, was to keep the libraries open at all three schools. Money will also go toward the books, technology and staff needed to support the new Common Core State Standards. Some of our fundraising events include a phone-a-thon, a lap-a-thon (where students walk laps to raise money), and a Spell-a-thon. We also have passed several parcel tax initiatives over the years to pay for art and music in our district.

When parents generously donate to schools, it can be unifying for a community. I’m not privy to what happens at parent meetings in my district, but as a parent, I know it feels good to help out schools if you can afford it.

Is it fair?

We are not a low-income community, and low-income communities have other opportunities that we may not qualify for when it comes to school funding, such as Title I funds. However, I wish the state or federal government would be more generous — especially to school districts where parents don’t have the means to fund the same types of enrichment programs that we are fortunate enough to have parents fund.

In closing, I would like to say thank you to the Brisbane community for being so generous over the years. All of the teachers here appreciate your generosity.

An Anaheim Elementary Education Association member, **DEBBIE RESNICK** teaches sixth grade.



A Brisbane Teachers Association member, **STEVE KEENER** teaches fourth and fifth grades.



In John's words...

I BECAME INTERESTED IN UNIONISM

when I was very young. My father was a radical. He and four other teachers started a union chapter of AFT [American Federation of Teachers] around our kitchen table. I saw it happen. I was dragged to school board meetings. I was raised by an activist.

STUDENTS SHOULD BE APPRECIATED

FOR all the work they did on this past election. They worked hard on the campaign, and I saw light bulbs go off in their heads about the importance of being involved in the political process.

WHAT I WOULD LIKE CTA MEMBERS TO KNOW ABOUT STUDENT CTA MEMBERS IS

they are here and need to be incorporated into the organization. Students say that they come into the room at State Council and sometimes they don't feel very welcome by traditional members. We need to make them feel welcome.

THE BEST WAY TO MAKE THEM FEEL

WELCOME is to give them something to do, so they'll come back. And we want them to come back. CTA members are getting older, and the association needs new blood. So welcome them. They're our future.

STUDENT CTA PRESIDENT IS BRIDGING THE GENERATION GAP

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

PEOPLE TEND TO BE surprised when they meet John Belleci, president of Student CTA. In many ways he is a typical student — he carries a backpack, attends school with the help of student loans, advocates for the young generation, and has views others may perceive as being radical. Now for the not so typical part. He is a grandfather and has a wealth of life experience to share with others.

“Yes, people are sometimes surprised when they meet me,” he laughs. “I tell them that age is just a state of mind and that being in school keeps you young. I see a lot of people my age lose their passion and fight. Being around kids keeps you young and fighting.”

Belleci, 50, is serving his second term as SCTA president and loves every minute of it. In addition to taking a full load of classes, he constantly visits SCTA chapters throughout California.

“My goal is trying to bridge the gap between their generation and mine. I try to make today's students aware of the issues surrounding unionism.”

He believes that much of a student's “education” lies outside of the classroom.

“This generation wants to be the best it can be — and I am trying to get them to understand they can't be the best if they aren't doing three things. First, they need to be aware politically. Second, they need to be in touch with diverse cultures. And third, they need to be involved in their communities. I constantly encourage students to communicate and collaborate with other organizations on campus, especially with diverse students. I urge to them go outside their comfort zone, because when they go into the classroom, there will be people they will feel uncomfortable with, and they have to know how to deal with that.”

Belleci, who grew up in Pittsburg, Con-

tra Costa County, faced challenges in life that delayed his teaching career. His father, a high school teacher, died when he was 16. He went to Sacramento State University on a scholarship, but when it ended after freshman year, he became ineligible for financial aid and had to drop out. He had four children — now grown — and raised one of them by himself. He had a job at a packaging plant making wooden barrels to store fruits and vegetables, worked at liquor stores, coached basketball and softball teams, and then moved to Vegas to work as a pit boss in a casino.

He also struggled with alcohol and drugs. In 2008 he got a DUI. He calls that event the catalyst that turned his life around. He got clean and sober, enrolled in some online classes, and never looked back.

“I became addicted to school,” he muses. “It became my focus.”

While he was enrolled in Saddleback Community College, a four-year transfer counselor convinced him to start a club for future teachers. He was the sole member. When he transferred to CSU Fullerton in 2009, he continued taking a few courses at Saddleback, and converted the Saddleback club into a Student CTA chapter. By then it had grown to seven members.

“I'm a hustler,” he laughs. “I'm constantly working to bring increasing numbers of students into SCTA and to increase the diversity within SCTA.”

He recently finished his thesis for his master's degree in history at CSU Fullerton, and he hopes to be teaching at a community college in the fall. He recently won the NEA Student Program Outstanding State Leader Award at the Student Leadership Conference in Atlanta, which he attributes to the collective work of the SCTA board and chapter leaders.



Q&A WITH DAWN O'KEEFFE

PROFESSIONAL FILMMAKERS Dawn and Jim O'Keeffe co-produced *Go Public*; Jim also directed the film by Bluefield Productions. Married 28 years, they have four children who attended public schools in Pasadena. We caught up with Dawn, who shares insights about her family and the film.

Why did you make the film? People have opinions about public schools that are not based on reality. So our purpose was to bring people into public schools so they would have a more informed understanding of the complexity, the beauty and the textured richness, as well as the challenges that are very real because of repeated budget cuts. We wanted to create informed advocates, so next time a community faces decisions about whether to pass a parcel tax or bond measure, there will be an appreciation for our schools and for what they accomplish every day.

Why weren't charter schools in Pasadena filmed? We didn't visit them because we were covering traditional public schools. I'm not anti-charter, but I have seen a lot of charter schools pulling away middle-class families — and it hurts public schools. We've had multiple charters fail in our community; that's been true all over the nation. When that happens, who takes those kids back? The public schools do.

How has the reaction to the film been? We've had a great reaction. People who don't have children in public school base their opinions on what they read in the newspaper or see on television, and many of them say the movie changed their opinion 180 degrees. They say public school is much different than the negative impressions they held. Parents with children in public school say the movie reinforced their view that they had made the right choice and made them feel they are part of something important and are contributing to the greater good. Teachers say they feel they have been seen, heard and vindicated — and that the work they do has been celebrated.

What do you want people to take away from this movie? There's been an onslaught of other movies from the voucher and charter movement saying, "We need an alternative because this isn't working." Our film shows public education is working. But it's working under stress, and you can't keep cutting back without an impact. I want people who see this movie to become advocates for public education. All of the decisions made about public schools are made by people who are not living the public school experience. There's a missing voice in the conversation. We wanted to capture that voice and tell the other side of the story. I think we did that.

Movie review: *Go see Go Public*

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

 A series of moments that create an entire school day flow from one to another in *Go Public: A Day in the Life of an American School District*. Unlike most documentaries, we aren't told in the opening minutes what the point of the movie is. In fact, the message isn't revealed until nearly the end, while a school principal drives home after a long day.

"Unless you have been in our schools and have walked through the doors and had the opportunity to see all the wonderful things that are happening, it's hard to make that call on how our schools are really doing," she muses aloud.

Go Public brings audiences through those doors so they can experience authentic moments. Some moments are wonderful; others aren't perfect. But unlike *Waiting for Superman*, which criticizes public schools without venturing inside, we get a firsthand look at the frustrations, small victories and joys that happen daily.

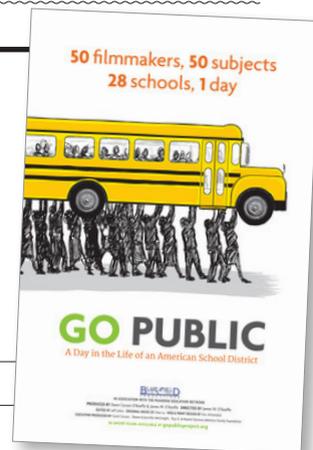
Husband and wife filmmakers James and Dawn O'Keeffe present a typical day in the Pasadena Unified School District — in a manner that's atypical. They asked 50 small camera crews to follow a variety of school staff, students and families from sunup to bedtime on May 8, 2012. The videographers (including students) recorded 50 subjects and visited 28 schools in a single day throughout the diverse district.

There's no narrative or commentary. Snippets of the school day speak for themselves. Teachers, classified employees, students,

administrators and parents are nameless, and we aren't sure who is who. Interactions with students are captured in a series of moments that weave together in a way that's alternately mesmerizing, mundane, dramatic, funny and gripping.

Some lovely moments: An African American girl earnestly tells her teacher she wants to be the first in her family to attend college. A school employee patiently deals with a student's emotional meltdown, offering a tissue and a snack. A teacher explains: "Of course it's hard work, but that's what life is." A school psychologist tells a mother that her son has demonstrated signs of empathy for the first time, and the mother breaks down. An alternative education student who thought he would end up in prison is planning for college. A teacher tells a student his artwork — nails in a shoe — is a wonderful example of irony. A janitor takes pride in keeping a school shipshape.

Just like most school days, the movie begins with children being woken by their parents, having breakfast, zipping up backpacks, and going to school by foot, bus and car. There are visits to multiple



classrooms, ranging from AP to special education. We see recesses, lunchtimes, counseling sessions and after-school activities, followed by journeys home. The first sign that something's different about this particular day comes when teachers stage an afternoon protest against budget cuts.

Students finish homework and parents cook dinner. Just when it seems that the students will be tucked in and kissed good-night and the credits will roll, it becomes apparent that the movie's not over. There's still a long night ahead. United Teachers of Pasadena (UTP) members, administrators and others are going to a school board meeting to discuss budget cuts.

Pleas are made to maintain programs and positions. UTP members remind school leaders of the sacrifices they have made by taking furlough days. A student tells board members that going to school

with people of different cultural backgrounds has made her a "more open person" and begs them to preserve the many things that make her school great.

Warning: Plot spoiler ahead.

A district that has already made \$2 million in budget cuts approves another \$4.5 million for the following year. During the credits, we learn some school employees we admired and followed for an entire day won't return, despite excellent work and dedication. We can only hope they will be hired back.



Maggie Reyes-Rothner, United Teachers of Pasadena, in a still from *Go Public*.

Go Public is an amazingly ambitious, layered, moving and inspirational film. It's a call to action for stakeholders everywhere to support public schools — because they help children succeed, for the most part, despite dwindling resources. *Go Public* shows us what make public

schools tick — the people — and reminds us that despite challenges, there's also a great deal to celebrate and treasure in our schools. To schedule a viewing in your community, visit www.tugg.com/titles and type in *Go Public*.

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MB1013-SEV-AD-CTA

Unions protect bad teachers.
WRONG.
Managers are anti-union.
WRONG again.
Superintendent **Judy White**
and MVEA President **Harold**
Acord dispel myths about
managers and unions.



Chapters thaw chilly relationships

to improve school climate



Frosty is good if you're talking about a snowman — but not when it describes the relationship between educators and administrators in your district.

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

S

TUDIES SHOW THAT “school climate” has a direct impact on achievement and behavior of students. It also impacts the motivation, productivity and job satisfaction of school employees.

Schools with a chilly climate tend to have lower test scores, more discipline problems and higher staff turnover.

Schools with a positive climate have honest and open communication, involve teachers in decision-making, and demonstrate a willingness to experiment. School employees tend to feel hopeful at these sites.

Can school climate change for the better? Of course!

While it may not be easy, it's possible for educators, administrators and school board members to put aside differences and work together to improve student success. It starts with improving communication between the union and the district.

Think about your school climate. Does it need improving? Learn from CTA chapters that have improved the local climate. It can't always be perfect, but teachers and administrators listen to one another, work together, and even share some “Kumbaya” moments.

MORENO VALLEY ENDS THE BIG CHILL

IT'S A "HE SAID, SHE SAID" dialogue between Moreno Valley Education Association President Harold Acord and Judy White, Moreno Valley School District superintendent, sitting side by side to dispel myths about managers and unions.

Unions protect bad employees, the superintendent says, tossing out the first myth.

Not true, counters Acord. Unions just want to ensure that everyone has due process and school leaders follow the contract.

Managers are anti-union, Acord says accusingly, taking on another myth.

False, says White. Most managers support teachers, and it shouldn't be assumed that they're anti-union.

The role-playing allows union members and administrators to clear the air, end misconceptions and open the lines of communication.

So does an exercise called "Getting Away From Gotchas."

The exchanges happen at a joint leadership conference titled "Excellence on Purpose: Collaborate, Coach and Connect." It's designed to improve communication so teachers and administrators can

work together to help students instead of fighting each other. Funded by donations and grants — including one from CTA — it's now an annual event. Other topics at the conference focus on the Common Core standards and cognitive coaching.

MVEA members working with district administrators designed the conference for several reasons: A revolving door of superintendents created inconsistency; there was mistrust between teachers and administrators; and test scores and

graduation rates were low because of these problems.

The conference served as a springboard to increase collaboration year-round, including monthly meetings with the district office cabinet, MVEA leaders and classified employees, town hall meetings, and a new teacher evaluation process that's being piloted at five schools, based on CTA's Evaluation Principles.

"Before, we had a top-down collaboration model," says Khaleelah Lewis, a teacher who taught a Common Core Literacy workshop at the conference. "Now, everyone has ownership and is working together to bring it back to the school sites. There's a trickle-down effect."

In the two years since MVEA and administrators became partners, student achievement has shot up on state tests and graduation rates have increased by 5 percent, says Anne Adler, MVEA

executive director, who credits collaboration for the upswing.

Teacher morale has also improved, relates MVEA member Denise Tellez.

"It's easier to talk, be open and share ideas. We're no longer told, 'You can't do that.' We are professionals and want to be treated as professionals. This type of communication allows for that."



Everyone has ownership, says Khaleelah Lewis.

And the winner is... Mount Diablo Unified School District

MOUNT DIABLO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT caused negative feelings to "runneth over" years ago when it purchased 3,000 coffee cups with the words "I'm appreciated" stamped in big letters and distributed them to school employees, who angrily returned them en masse at a school board meeting.

After years of fighting for health benefits and raises, members of the Mount Diablo Education Association (MDEA) felt anything but appreciated. Morale was at an all-time low, and the district's climate needed thawing.

Coffee cups may not have been the right way to go about it, but showing appreciation wasn't a bad idea, thought MDEA President Guy Moore. So he decided to hold the first MDEA Academy Awards ceremony to improve morale, bring different factions together and focus on the positive.

"Our district doesn't recognize employees and we suffer from low morale, so we decided to organize our own event to honor employees and volunteers who go above and beyond the call of duty, including teachers, classified employees and administrators."

School board members, administrators, PTA members and others joined with MDEA on the project. The superintendent was asked to contribute \$5,000 — the cost of the coffee cups — and the district came through. Shortly thereafter, the superintendent was let go by the district, causing more turmoil and upheaval.

Enthusiasm temporarily waned with the superintendent's ouster, but MDEA decided the show must go on. A culinary arts class offered to cater the May 17 event. Unions who had partnered with CTA to pass Proposition 30 donated money for the gala, which had 250 attendees. State Superintendent Tom Torlakson, state Sen. Mark DeSaulnier,

READ MORE ON PAGE 28. →



Administrators Sue Peters and Helena Postrik on the red carpet with MDEA Executive Board member Susan Seeley at the Academy Awards.

Mount Diablo Unified School District

(continued)

and Assembly Member Susan Bonilla handed out awards.

Stars on the walls contained quotes about the nominees for categories that included Teacher of the Year, Classified Employee, Leadership and Courage, Outstanding Administrator, Student Advocate, Outstanding Volunteer, and Most Inspirational. Elegant table settings added ambience, and a student glee club sang. Speeches, tears and abundant goodwill accompanied the handing out of the awards.

"It was an event that spotlighted the brilliant teachers, administrators, classified employees and volunteers that make this a wonderful district," says school librarian and MDEA member Laurel Burns. "It united the entire Mount Diablo community, and set a positive tone for future interactions."

MDEA had \$7,000 left over from the dinner, and used it as seed money to start a foundation dedicated to supporting the arts in elementary schools. Plans are now under way for a second awards ceremony.

"I think this made people realize that teachers care about other things besides getting more money and working conditions," says Moore. "It showed the community we can work together. When we change the focus from negative to positive by highlighting the great work people do, things can change for the better."

Editor's Note: Relationships are never perfect. MDEA and the district are at impasse in negotiations and MDEA is publicly protesting inadequate compensation and health benefits. The Academy Awards were a giant step toward improving morale, says MDEA President Guy Moore. "We look forward to settling our contract dispute so we can continue working together to improve school climate."



"We're on equal footing," says Ruth Gaer, here having a "fierce conversation" with school administrator Mark Douglas.



"FIERCE CONVERSATIONS" END FIGHTING IN FULLERTON



FIVE YEARS AGO, administrators in Fullerton Elementary School District routinely sent "top-down memos" that ticked teachers off. Neither side trusted the other. Rather than engaging in meaningful dialogue, administrators and teachers talked at each other.

Things have improved, says Karla Turner, Fullerton Elementary Teachers Association (FETA) president. Now, memos are frequently co-written by union leadership and administrators to strike a positive tone. They view each other as partners, not adversaries. "Fierce conversations," where people say what they mean without fear of repercussion, happen frequently.

A change in superintendents five years ago started the ball rolling in a more positive direction. During that time, Spanish teacher Ruth Gaer shared information with colleagues about ABC School District in Cerritos, where teachers and administrators had improved relationships.

Her husband, Ray Gaer, is president of that Cerritos chapter, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers. He wanted a better working environment for Ruth, so he invited Fullerton teachers, administrators and classified staff to a two-day PAL (Partnership between Administration and Labor) retreat at a hotel, where they could see positive behavior modeled. Fullerton folks were impressed at the display of civility. After three years of workshops in the PAL process, Fullerton sponsored its own PAL retreat as a way to improve communication between educators and administrators.

"Our communication improved dramatically," says Ruth Gaer, who serves on the FETA bargaining team. "We're able to be as honest as possible. We don't play games. We are now on equal footing."

The book *Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and in Life One Conversation at a Time* by Susan Scott was

distributed to attendees at the retreat, and administrators, educators and classified employees used the book to discuss work issues and emotions in ways that were honest, respectful and diplomatic.

Fierce conversations continue in meetings between school staff and educators. Lawyers, once part of every bargaining session, are no longer needed. Money saved from the absence of legal representa-

tion has been redirected to fund professional development for teacher evaluation task force members. FETA members say a harmonious relationship with administration resulted in a more "teacher-friendly" evaluation process that has been piloted in schools. Test scores have gone up, which both parties attribute to being on the same page.

"Our motto is, 'We don't let each other fail,'" says Turner. "We have each other's back."

Lessons were learned, says culinary arts teacher and FETA member Kristin Montoya.

"Everybody has a different perspective, but we all want what's best for the kids. When we work together instead of being 'us versus them,' we can reach our goals much quicker than we did in the past."



Karla Turner

Advocacy

News from the legal, legislative, bargaining and education policy fronts



Working for professional teaching conditions and compensation is as vital to CTA members as their student grade book or lesson planner.

LINDA RAMON, ALPINE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION, IS ONE OF SO MANY MEMBERS ADVOCATING FOR THEIR COLLEAGUES STATEWIDE. READ ABOUT THE ISSUES AND ACTIONS ON PAGE 34.



Meet an advocate:

CTA MEMBER AND LAWMAKER SUSAN BONILLA

INTERVIEWED BY LEN FELDMAN

♥ **ASSEMBLY MEMBER SUSAN BONILLA** is one of a growing number of educators who serve in the California Legislature. A former English teacher in Mt. Diablo, she chairs the Assembly Select Committee on Increasing the Integration of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) in Education in California K-14 schools. She authored AB 484, the CTA-backed measure that suspended the STAR exam so that the state could bring its student assessment system in line with the new Common Core State Standards.

Bonilla represents Assembly District 14, which includes portions of Contra Costa and Solano counties.

WHAT DID YOU DO BEFORE BECOMING A LAWMAKER?

My real job is being a teacher. Teaching is the career that best reflects my passion and values, and it continues to be relevant to my work in Sacramento. I was teaching English, *Macbeth* to be precise, in the Mount Diablo School District, when I was first elected to Concord City Council in a surprise grass-roots victory. Four years later, I moved to the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors and enjoyed the opportunity to work on strengthening the safety net for many of the same families I had served in the classroom.

WHAT LED YOU TO RUN FOR OFFICE?

My first reaction to jumping into politics, even at the local level, was similar to most people. Why would I ever consider the hassle, frustration and gridlock to be worth the exposure and impacts on myself and my family? But it has been a fulfilling choice, as I can now help shape statewide education policy from the unique perspective of a teacher who is passionate about education.

WHAT STEPS SHOULD THE LEGISLATURE TAKE TO HELP SCHOOLS SUCCEED?

While many people focus on the percentage of the state budget that goes to fund education and feel that 50 percent is a huge share, the reality is we have been disinvesting in education over the last 40 years as measured by the percentage of personal income spent on schools, shrinking from 5.6 percent 40 years ago to 3.5 percent today. The Legislature needs to lead on increasing funds for education and advocate for a lower voter threshold for local parcel taxes to be passed for education.

As chair of the Assembly Budget Committee on Education Finance, I created the impetus for an improved compromise to be reached on the Local Control Funding Formula. We need to continue to work on successful implementation of the formula and accountability measures. Given the importance of education for California's success, teachers are significant stakeholders and will make the difference on the issue of increasing funding. The passage of Proposition 30 demonstrated the leadership of a teacher-led initiative that has stabilized California's finances for the next several years. We need your help and determination again to get our state priorities sorted out.

WHAT ARE YOUR HOPES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION?

Let's refocus the discussion about education in our state. We have heard enough criticism and have seen the ineffectiveness of short-sighted reform efforts. Now is the time for experienced educators to lead with proven solutions and demonstrate how increased resources can help our students become successful. Communities need to hear the voices of their teachers restoring hope and confidence in public education. We need to continue preparing our students and schools for today's fast-paced and dynamic job market. Our students deserve this opportunity to be challenged by standards that require analytical thinking.

Last year, I worked with the governor and helped secure \$1.25 billion in funding for implementing Common Core State Standards. The infusion of this one-time funding for professional development and technology upgrades means we are positioned to transition to a successful 21st century model of education and provide educators with the tools to advance instruction and integrate technology into the learning environment.

That is why I authored AB 484 this year — one of the most important and revolutionary changes to education policy. With this new law, our schools can move away from outdated STAR tests and prepare students and teachers for better assessments that reflect the real-world knowledge needed for young people to succeed in college and careers.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE EDUCATORS ABOUT WORKING WITH THE LEGISLATORS?

As lawmakers, we must hear from teachers and understand their concerns and recommendations to improve our schools.

I encourage teachers to meet with their state representatives at the Capitol and in their districts, and share feedback of what they are experiencing in the classrooms. Recently I was invited to attend Mount Diablo Education Association's teacher representative meeting. It was valuable to get direct feedback and suggestions from teachers on AB 484, including ideas for future legislation.

Educate your legislators and hold them accountable. Let's see if we can pass the test!

ARE YOU READY FOR THE 2014 LEGISLATIVE SESSION?

THE HEART OF CTA's lobbying strategy is you and the grassroots involvement of members in every corner of the state. Although CTA's lobbyists play a key role during the session, legislators want — and need — to hear how their actions will impact children and public education back home. Lobbying isn't hard — and it can be fun. You don't have to be an expert on education policy or anything else. Remember, though, that you are the expert on how legislation will affect your students and your school.



Letters

It's not done much anymore, but personal letters that state your views on how the proposed legislation will affect your profession, schools, or community gets attention.



Emails

When speed is desirable because of imminent action on a piece of legislation, emails may be sent to a legislator. Go to www.cta.org/whosyourlegislator to get your legislators' contact information.



Telephone calls

This form of communication is particularly effective when the person making the call has established a personal relationship with the legislator. Direct contact with the legislator is not always possible, but messages can be left with aides or secretaries.



Meeting with legislators

The most effective communication, naturally, is that which takes place face to face. Plan to meet with your legislator as frequently as possible before and between sessions, and during recesses. In addition to personal or small-group meetings with your legislators, you may want to plan at least one meeting a year at which your legislator meets with a larger group such as your site council or PTA/PTO.



Go Online

cta.org/legislation

Here are some resources to help you become an effective citizen lobbyist.

A great place to start is www.cta.org/legislation.

Take action at capwiz.com/nea/ca.

Find CTA's position on legislation at cta.org/ctasbillposition.

Find your legislator at cta.org/whosyourlegislator.

Sign up for *Capitol News*, a biweekly legislative update, by emailing capitolnews@cta.org.



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“Rehire rights, access to health care, not enough information on the Affordable Care Act, paid office hours, access to offices, equal pay for equal work and general inclusion” are issues facing adjunct faculty, says **Denise Johnson**. “For some, it’s a breakthrough to be invited to a department meeting.”

Adjunct faculty call for equity

Discussion, rallies, workshops highlight Campus Equity Week

BY DINA MARTIN

♥ **ASK DENISE JOHNSON** about the issues facing adjunct faculty and she could draw you a picture.

In fact, that’s what she did for the Community College Association (CCA) when she designed a variety of materials for faculty to use in observing Campus Equity Week (CEW) in late October. An artist, graphic designer, art history instructor and adjunct representative in the Chaffey College Faculty Association, Johnson has been an activist for part-time faculty since attending a conference of the New Faculty Majority three years ago.

“Rehire rights, access to health care, not enough information on the Affordable Care Act, paid office hours, access to offices, equal pay for equal work, and general

inclusion,” she says, ticking off the list. “For some, it’s a breakthrough to be invited to a department meeting.”

Johnson attended that first conference to join the effort to unite full- and part-time faculty over a shared interest in quality education and equity. Since then, she has become increasingly involved in committees on campus, in her union, and now in CCA’s Part-time Issues Committee.

At their meeting in September, members contributed creative input to a coherent plan for CCA chapters’ CEW activities, dividing up the work of designing their “tool kit” for all campuses. As part of that committee, Johnson designed posters, certificates, mugs and buttons to call attention to equity issues, while others took on the

work of research and making sample items so that CCA chapters could order what they needed. The committee members also staffed a table at CCA’s fall conference, where they handed out materials and the electronic tool kit to representatives from 23 chapters.

This year, community college adjuncts were joined by their California Faculty Association (CFA) colleagues in the CSU system and NEA members across the country in raising awareness of the nation’s increasingly stratified higher education system.

The issue has never been more pressing. With adjunct faculty now constituting the “New Faculty Majority,” or about two-thirds of faculty nationwide, the annual

Campus Equity Week has become more visible at colleges across the country.

Despite their doctoral degrees and other experiences, adjunct faculty are drastically underpaid, many earning less than the average sales clerk at Wal-Mart and often having no health care benefits.

The majority of contingent academic workers earned an average wage of \$2,700 for a three-credit course in 2010, according to NEA. This figure means they barely made the minimum wage for each hour of their work, despite holding advanced degrees.

Despite the dreary news, Johnson is optimistic that progress is being made.

“I think we’re in the process of awakening,” she said. “We’re beginning to make strides in bringing equity to campuses.”

Meanwhile, faculty on one campus, College of the Canyons in Santa Clarita, added a new dimension to the ongoing struggle — a forum on self-censorship.

The idea emerged from a discussion between faculty association president Vincent Devlahovich and an adjunct faculty member.

“He shared in confidence his concerns about how adjuncts often feel they cannot be candid in

their respective departments or at their respective institutions for fear of how they may be perceived by full-time faculty and administrators. These perceptions could negatively influence section assignments by chairs, recommendations by full-time hiring committees, and their reputations in general — creating an environment where

adjunct faculty must self-censor themselves,” Devlahovich says. “Having been an adjunct, I see the phenomenon of self-censorship as a symptom of the job insecurity experienced by our adjunct colleagues.”

A number of rallies, workshops and discussions sponsored by CFA were held on CSU campuses as well.

CFA President Lillian Taiz opened the first event of Campus Equity Week with the words: “What unifies us all across the country this week is a belief that a two-tiered system will destroy meaningful access for millions of working people, robbing them and our society of the benefits quality higher education can provide.”

Despite dreary news, progress is being made.

You protect your loved ones...



BARGAINING UPDATES

COMPILED BY BILL GUY, DINA MARTIN AND MIKE MYSLINSKI

WORKING FOR PROFESSIONAL working conditions and compensation is as vital to CTA members as their student grade book or lesson planner. Here are just a few examples of the advocacy occurring statewide. For details and a review of more local activities, go to cta.org/bargainingupdates.



▲ **Woodland** Yolo Education Association members, who have worked without a contract for over a year, picket in Woodland's Heritage Plaza. They teach some of the most challenging students, including physically and emotionally disabled youths and those just released from juvenile detention. YEA grievances include the lack of an agreed-upon disciplinary procedure, not being consulted on changes affecting their programs, and lower than average pay. At press time, YEA members voted to reject an inferior contract offer and proceed to fact-finding.



▲ **Yuba City** Yuba City Teachers Association President **Dina Luetgens** wants a contract settlement that provides salaries that meet the state average and are at least comparable to what teachers earn in nearby Marysville. Teachers are concerned about the quality of education if the district is unable to recruit and retain educators. YCTA is demanding that the district abide by the decision of a neutral arbitrator and discontinue its practice of not advancing teachers on the salary schedule because they took time to have babies or care for family medical issues.



▲ **Alpine** Alpine Teachers Association members **Henry Perez, Monica Vajtaskovic, Nicole LaBella, Cheryl Irick, Brit Montalbano, Emily Principe** and **Laurie Hinkel** are among the crowd of 300 attending an Alpine Union School District board meeting Dec. 10 as the board votes to impose a draconian contract, despite the raucous outpouring of support for the chapter. If allowed to stand, the contract could permanently cut nearly half of Alpine teachers' compensation by more than 30 percent. Alpine educators are among the lowest-paid in San Diego County and resent having to pay for the district's fiscal mismanagement.



▲ **Denair** **Rosanne Cantwell** joins colleagues in a protest. After having already taken six furlough days, the Denair Unified Teachers Association is fighting the superintendent's demand that teachers take an 11 percent pay cut in order to alleviate the district's financial problems — problems largely caused by poor administrative decisions. (Photo by Steve Miller.)

Test items, delivery system to be tested

Smarter Balanced Field Test
is March 18 to June 6

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION has slated the Smarter Balanced Field Test, a test of the state's new assessment system aligned to the Common Core State Standards, to occur between March 18 and June 6, 2014.

Rather than half the students in a district taking English-language arts (ELA) and half taking math, as originally planned, the state is moving to a model that allows all students to take a smaller sample test of both ELA and math. The field test will be fully computer-based. The following will be tested:

- Students in grades 3-8 and grade 11.
- A small sample of grade 9 and grade 10 students.

The Field Test will not be computer adaptive and each test will include a performance task in addition to multiple choice, matching, fill-in tables, drag and drop, graphing, short text and essay items.



The field test will assess the validity and reliability of more than 20,000 newly developed test items. The spring 2014 field test will give all education stakeholders a look at the future assessment system. Schools will test within six-week windows. The field test data is not valid for assessment progress, so no student scores will be generated.

Find details about the Smarter Balanced Field Test at www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/sa/smarterfieldtest.asp.

Need more information? Contact the CDE Statewide Assessment Transition Office at 916-445-8517 or email sbac@cde.ca.gov.



...but who's protecting you?

Your loved ones depend on you, but would you still be able to provide for them if a disability prevented you from working? Take steps to maintain their way of life and yours with CTA-endorsed Disability Insurance from The Standard. It helps safeguard against loss of income due to an illness or injury. Start protecting what's important to you at CTAMemberBenefits.org/TheStandard.

For costs and further details of the coverage, including exclusions, any reductions or limitations and the terms under which the policy may be continued in force, please contact Standard Insurance Company at 800-522-0406 (TTY). Standard Insurance Company, 1100 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204 GP 190-LTD/S399/CTA.1 SI 16792-CTAvol



Your professional rights are on trial

Corporate special interests want to use you to push their political agenda

A LOS ANGELES SUPERIOR COURT judge has ruled the deeply misguided *Vergara vs. State of California* lawsuit may proceed to trial, denying motions by CTA, the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) and the state of California for summary judgment. However, the judge said the decision to deny the request to dismiss the case in no way indicates the trial's outcome.

CFT and CTA remain firmly committed to protecting learning and teaching environments, despite the ruling that puts on trial the professional rights of teachers.

The *Vergara* lawsuit attacks the Education Code provisions that grant permanent status to teachers, provide due process in teacher dismissal proceedings, and protect seniority as a component of the layoff process. The suit demands that the court declare each of these statutory protections unconstitutional.

The *Vergara* lawsuit was filed against the state of California and three school districts. As CTA does not write or administer the laws at issue in the suit, CTA was not originally a party. CTA and CFT chose to intervene jointly — to safeguard teacher job protections that benefit the educational system, certainly, but equally to protect a carefully crafted legislative scheme from manipulation by big-pocketed ideologues with no understanding of the realities of public education in this state.

"It's disappointing because putting professional rights of teachers on trial hurts students," says CTA President Dean E. Vogel of the ruling. "This most recent shenanigan by corporate special interests and billionaires to push their education agenda on California public schools is resulting in a waste of taxpayer dollars and time — time that should be spent focusing on providing a quality education to all students as the economy improves. CTA will

continue to fight to ensure we have qualified and experienced teachers in the classrooms whose rights are respected as set forth by law, and not subject to arbitrary and capricious behavior or favoritism."

The officially named plaintiffs in *Vergara* are nine California public school students. But the real driver of the suit appears to be a Silicon Valley entrepreneur, David Welch. Welch created the nonprofit Students Matter for the purpose of bankrolling this suit, and has hired a legal team at Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, a law firm that counts Wal-Mart among its many corporate clients, to make his case.

Simply put, this lawsuit highlights the wrong problems, proposes the wrong solutions, and follows the wrong process. It threatens not only basic teacher employment protections, but the role and independence of the Legislature in regulating public education.

Educators are the first to say California can do more to help improve our schools. There are many challenges, including poverty, a lack of adequate funding and resources for education, and a lack of adequate support for teachers — who according to some reports are now leaving the profession in unprecedented numbers because of this lack of support.

The plaintiffs are uninterested in these issues, however. Consistent with the "bad teacher" narrative of the corporate education "reform" movement, this lawsuit is based on the premise that all of the societal problems reflected in our education system could be solved just by eviscerating teachers' rights.

As for administrators' need to manage their workforce, which this lawsuit claims to champion, the fact is that the current legal system balances teacher protections with opportunities for administrators to discipline and

discharge employees. The remedy sought in the suit, by contrast, would provide administrators *unfettered* discretion in employment decisions. In so doing, it would also remove all checks on — to borrow the plaintiffs' language — "grossly ineffective" administration.

How to improve our education system, including the very laws the *Vergara* suit attacks, is something vigorously debated throughout our communities and in Sacramento. And CTA has supported numerous efforts to support lower performing schools, changes to improve teacher evaluation and efforts to streamline the dismissal process. Circumventing the legislative process, as this lawsuit seeks to do, will strip teachers of their due process rights and will not improve student learning. It will make it harder to attract and retain quality teachers in our classrooms, and it ignores all the research that shows experience is a key factor in effective teaching. This lawsuit further destabilizes the teaching profession, targeting the very rights that help keep teachers in the profession for the long haul.

Perhaps even more egregious than the *Vergara* legal claims is how David Welch and his law firm are selling their case to the public — as a lawsuit seeking justice on behalf of the disenfranchised. In September, for example, one of the *Vergara* plaintiffs' lead attorneys invoked Dr. Martin Luther King in an editorial in the *Huffington Post*, and suggested that the lawsuit is the *Brown v. Board of Education* of our time.

Educator rights and due process protections have become favorite targets of those who seek to corporatize and privatize education as they want to distract from the real work that needs to be done to improve public education. Work CTA has long been doing.

As the *Vergara* lawsuit proceeds, CTA's voice — your voice — on these issues is more important than ever.

The remedy sought in the lawsuit would provide administrators unfettered discretion in employment decisions.

Learning

Members' best practices, teaching ideas and education trends



Taking a different approach and building a “Dream School” became more feasible this year at Gauer Elementary School, thanks to a \$20,000 grant from CTA’s Institute for Learning (IFT). Staff **morale has gone up**, along with **parent involvement** and **school spirit**.

STAFF MEMBERS LIKE **MEGAN BROWN**, SHOWN WATCHING CESAR BEHENA BUILD A HOUSE OF “STRENGTH” CARDS, BELIEVE THESE CHANGES MEAN YOUNG SCHOLARS CAN IDENTIFY THEIR TALENTS AND MAXIMIZE THEIR POTENTIAL. TURN THE PAGE TO READ HOW.



CTA grant money allows artists to visit classrooms, providing teachers time to collaborate.



“Wonderful things are happening here,” says **Virginia Tibbetts** (shown above).



VIRGINIA TIBBETTS’ sixth-grade students pause at a bulletin board before picking out tags that emphasize positive traits they identify with. The tags have words like *leadership*, *kindness*, *forgiveness* and *bravery*. Students wear them proudly around their necks.

A student who behaved well for a substitute teacher while others goofed off the day before selects a tag that says *leadership*, and her teacher beams.

“That’s what I expect from you,” Tibbetts says. “Use your strengths to be the best person you can be. That’s an example of working from your strengths.”

In an era of high-stakes testing, Gauer Elementary School has dared to take a different approach. Visual and performing arts are incorporated into the curriculum to stimulate students’ creativity and love of learning. Emphasis on the “whole child,” instead of just test scores, encourages teachers to build on students’ strengths rather than weaknesses, as well as nurture character traits like empathy, leadership and resilience. Staff members say they are deeply committed to this transformation and are much happier about the students’ engagement in school.

“We wanted a cultural change,” says Principal Debbie Schroeder, who partnered with Anaheim Elementary Education Association (AEEA) members for a new vision. “We wanted to look at each other’s strengths instead of deficits and extend that to our scholars, staff and parents.”



Virginia Tibbetts' students enjoy a dance/exercise activity.

Taking a different approach and building a “Dream School” became more feasible this year thanks to a \$20,000 grant from CTA’s Institute for Learning (IFT). The staff’s vision for the school involves the creation of a joyful and intellectually stimulating environment where scholars thrive and become well-rounded individuals.

To determine strengths, staff took the Gallup StrengthsFinder assessment, and upper-grade students took the free VIA Survey from Values in Action Institute on Character (www.viacharacter.org). Both assessments identify particular character strengths of staff and students that can be used to discover and develop their talents. There is a deeply held belief that everyone is “good at something.”

“If a child is struggling with academics six hours each day, school is an unfriendly, un-fun place to be,” says teacher Amy Asaoka-Nakakihara, who co-wrote the grant application with Tibbetts — with support of the entire Gauer staff. “Students start thinking they aren’t good at anything. We want our scholars to know that yes, school may be hard, but you are an amazing human being and you have talents you need to nurture and strengthen, which will benefit the world.”

For years, Gauer teachers and parents had dreamed of having visual and performing arts in their classrooms. The IFT grant money allows dance, music, and choral guest artists to visit classrooms, providing teachers with time to collaborate. Teachers also provide after-school enrichment in their areas of expertise by holding sports clinics, visual and perform-



Amy Asaoka-Nakakihara talks with Jacob Vargas about his writing assignment.

ing arts classes, and computer programming. They are proud that Gauer has leveled the playing field for students in this low-income community where many families can’t afford extras.

AEEA members and administration held a “Stakeholders Summit” with community members to explain their mission, and created a mission statement for the school. Think tanks (don’t call them committees) are devoted to strategies for building on staff strengths, developing strengths in scholars, teaching to the whole child, and developing acceptance and empathy.

A driving force behind the strength-based transformation is that students see humanity and value in everyone they encounter. Recently, school custodian Sabino Fernandez talked to students about his life, his children, and his pride in taking care of Gauer. This fostered a newfound respect in students for work performed by all school employees on campus.

Staff morale has gone up, along with parent involvement and school spirit. Staff members believe these changes will result in scholars being able to identify their character strengths and talents and maximize their potential.

“Wonderful things are happening here,” says Tibbetts. “It’s wonderful to see so many smiles on so many people’s faces.”

Learn how you can bring change like this to your school.

teacherdrivenchange.org

CTA Language Acquisition Committee members **Lisa Gutierrez Guzman, Luisa Howell, Pye Cornejo** and **Teresa Basin** listen to an introduction to the new toolkit at the October State Council meeting.

“Although the CCSS represent a major reform of public education, they do not explicitly state how English learners’ specific needs should be addressed,” says Nancy Hofrock, CTA’s Language Acquisition Committee chair and Fontana Teachers Association vice president. She is also the CTA liaison to Californians Together.

Practices of a narrowed curriculum and years spent in English and math interventions, support classes and instruction, coupled with little or no instruction in science, social studies and the arts, have resulted in gaps in essential academic background knowledge for many of the state’s English learners. This makes it even more critical that these students have access to background knowledge needed to comprehend and critically engage with academic texts at the level required by the CCSS in all subject areas.

“The CCSS offer a greater opportunity for equal access to education for English learners,” says Hofrock. “The toolkit meets a huge need for parents, teachers, education support professionals, and all stakeholders to help make sure that the needs of our English learners are met. It gives us the resources to be frontline advocates for them.”

The toolkit provides resources for use by educators, policymakers, parents and community members in dialogues at the local, district and state levels for raising concerns, pushing for the supports needed by English learners, and advancing the vision of English-language education that the Common Core can make possible.

The toolkit includes:

- Background paper on the opportunities and challenges that the Common Core standards present for curriculum, instruction and assessment of English learners.
- Talking points for policymakers and school site, district and county level educators to insert the needs of English learners in Common Core standards dialogues.
- Palm card with key issues to be raised in support of English learners in any Common Core conversation.
- PowerPoint presentation to address the needs of English learners when implementing Common Core standards.
- CD containing PDFs of all the documents in the kits plus additional resource articles.

Additional information and a toolkit order form can be found on the Californians Together website: www.californianstogether.org. The toolkit is available now in English. A Spanish version is planned for release in January 2014.

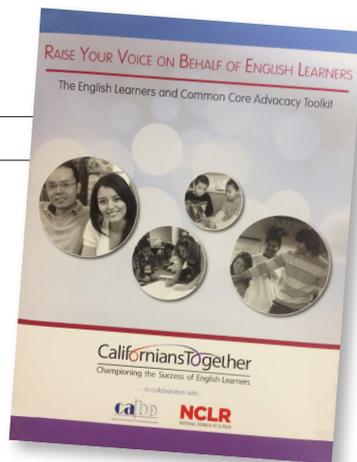


Raise Your Voice for English Learners

STORY AND PHOTO BY BILL GUY

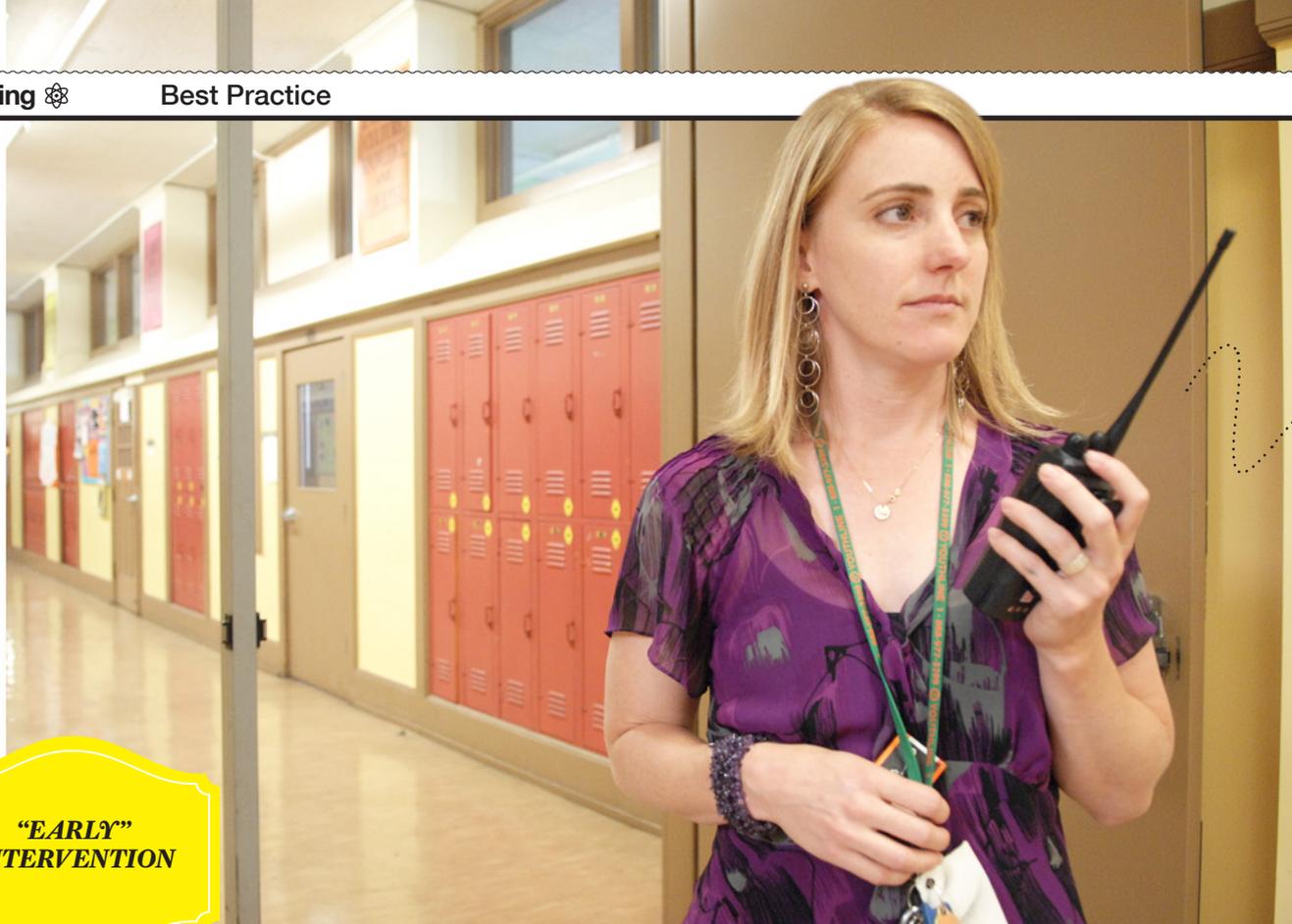
 **THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS (CCSS)** call upon all content teachers to focus on vocabulary, oral language and discourse patterns deemed essential for academic work within their disciplines. Add the fact that a quarter of California students are English learners, and the task ahead for educators becomes even more complex.

That’s where a new resource comes in: “Raise Your Voice on Behalf of English Learners: The English Learners and Common Core Advocacy Toolkit.” Developed as a collaborative effort by Californians Together, the California Association for Bilingual Education, and the National Council of La Raza, the toolkit is designed to help educators, parents and policymakers understand the CCSS and provide the support English learners need to achieve academic success.





**“EARLY”
INTERVENTION**



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SOCIAL WORKER

BY SHERRY POSNICK-GOODWIN

“It’s Early. What’s going on?”

As the school bell rings to start a new day, Bridget Early gets a call on her walkie-talkie, the first of many. It’s often the way her day begins.

 **THE EVERETT MIDDLE SCHOOL** social worker’s role is helping to “defuse” tension throughout the campus — and support students living in poverty and challenging circumstances. She helps teachers focus on academics by running interference when a crisis occurs.

There’s no such thing as a typical day, but typical events include meditation, mentoring, meeting with parents, suicide assessment, contacting Children’s Protective Services, educating students about bullying and homophobia, and facilitating “community circles” for better communication. She supports teachers exhausted from working with a challenging population of children, many of whom are new to the country.

Many of the school’s new arrivals are rejoining a parent who came here years ago to make a better life, and reunification in a foreign country can be traumatic, she notes.

“My job is helping kids who are not having their basic needs met,” says Early, United Educators of San Francisco. “They are expected to sit in class and focus on school work and testing, when maybe the night before there was crazy domestic violence and shootings outside their window. Maybe they’re with a parent who is a stranger. It’s hard for them to come here and set all that aside.”

Every school in San Francisco has at least one part-time social worker, and Early is one of two at her school. Statewide, 430 school-based professionals carry the title of school social worker (SSW) for the 5 million plus students ages 5-17. The California Association of School Social Workers recommended ratio of students to school social workers is 250 to 1.

She appreciates that her district values what she does. “I love my job and would never trade it for anything,” says Early, who sprints down the hallway to avoid being late.



**8:10
A.M.**

Students write something nice about the person next to them and pass it around during a “community circle” in the homeroom of eighth-grade teacher Alex Algonos. Words like cool, awesome, nice, amazing and sweet elicit smiles. Students say “circle time” reduces bullying. “I’m so happy right now,” beams Demaya Connors, enjoying the nice things said about her.



**8:40
A.M.**

A boy suspended for slamming a door on a teacher’s hand is processed for re-entry to the school. Sullen and angry, he explains he intended to slam the door and call the teacher a name, but not hurt her. Early asks how the incident affected his classmates. He admits that they were scared and unable to learn. The teacher is brought in, and the boy apologizes. Early asks him about warning signs before he erupts into rage. He says he balls up his fists and feels like calling people names when he gets mad. He promises that the next time he feels angry he will visit Early at the Wellness Center to calm down.

**8:50
A.M.**

A boy strolls into the Wellness Center, anger emanating from his bulky frame. The student, who is emotionally disturbed, tells Early that he needs a break from his class. After a time-out and a few kind words, he’s ready to return. “Miss Early helps me calm down by motivating me to learn. She’s great at her job.”

**10:00
A.M.**

Early rounds up at-risk students who call themselves the “Sixth Grade Mob,” asking if they’ll attend a meeting she has planned with the help of probation officers to deter them from gangs. One boy with an orange Mohawk says he doesn’t want to go. “Just trust me,” says Early. “Give it a try.” His reluctance soon turns to enthusiasm; he brings other students to Early, saying they will also benefit from the meeting.

**9:30
A.M.**

Early gets a call that a boy has caused a disruption. In the hallway he explains that he found a dead bug, picked it up and put it on a girl’s desk. His teacher made him call his father. “I didn’t do it on purpose. Well, maybe kind of on purpose,” he says, looking remorseful. “I know I was trying to be funny, but it affected my teacher, and I disappointed her.” He promises not to do it again.



**10:30
A.M.**

A boy comes to the Wellness Center, upset about “harassment.” He declines her offer of mediation, but seems calmer after a talk. He has suffered abuse by his father and is struggling with his mother, who won’t accept that he’s gay, says Early. She schedules him for a counseling session with a marriage and family therapist (MFT) interning at the school. Early spends a lot of time educating students about homophobia, and sponsors the Gay-Straight Alliance and the school’s gay pride week. Students come out to her, but are afraid to be open at this age.



**11:00
A.M.**

The “Sixth Grade Mob” members meet with “Red,” an ex-gang member, for a “scared straight” type of conversation. Most of them are “gang wannabes,” says Early, who hopes this talk might put them on a better path. Red describes being shot and stabbed numerous times and his “friends” abandoning him during recuperation and incarceration. “They were running in the streets and not there for me. A lot of people glorify the gang thing and think it’s cool, but it’s really not. Small things lead to big things.”

READ MORE
ON PAGE 44.



**11:30
A.M.**

Early contemplates how the presentation went. "I think it will affect some of them not at all, and some who want to look cool in front of their friends will go home tonight and really think about it. We can't force them to make right decisions, but we can provide information to make right decisions."



**11:45
A.M.**

A boy has been sent to Early for wearing blue shoes. Blue and red are banned as gang colors. Early uses masking tape to cover up the blue. "Obviously tape doesn't solve the gang problem," she says, winding tape around his shoes. "But it won't trigger gang behavior in other kids."



**12:00
P.M.**

Early has pizza waiting for a new group of peer mediators. She trains them to handle disputes, welcome new students and give tours. She reminds them conflict resolution is confidential and not to be discussed publicly. She then takes photos of the mediators, some of them flashing the peace sign for the camera.

**1:45
P.M.**

Early returns phone calls to parents, grandparents, social service agencies and others seeking information about the well-being of students.



**1:15
P.M.**

Two boys having a playground dispute are brought in by a security officer. One repeatedly kicked a ball at another. Swearwords and threats were exchanged. The boy hit by the ball agrees to make peace, but the one who kicked it laughs, rolls his head and mumbles more threats. Early asks if he is able to "move on," and he repeatedly replies "I don't care." She suspects he is under the influence of something and asks the guard to remove him and investigate. Off he goes.

**12:30
P.M.**

Early checks in with MFT intern Ali Howard, who has learned a lot from her mentor. "When I first came here, I was alarmed," says Howard. "Bridget said 'Reset your goals,' and even getting some of these kids to come to school every day is a major accomplishment. It's not about saving every kid and making life perfect. Sometimes kids just need

to know that someone cares about them."



**3:30
P.M.**

Early attends a professional learning community meeting with staff and provides a sympathetic ear to stressed-out teachers. "Both my parents are public school teachers, so it's important for me to support teachers. I seriously think that teaching is the most admirable job and that they need a space where they can talk about things. They need an outlet." She also offers "wellness" sessions with teachers once a week during lunchtime.

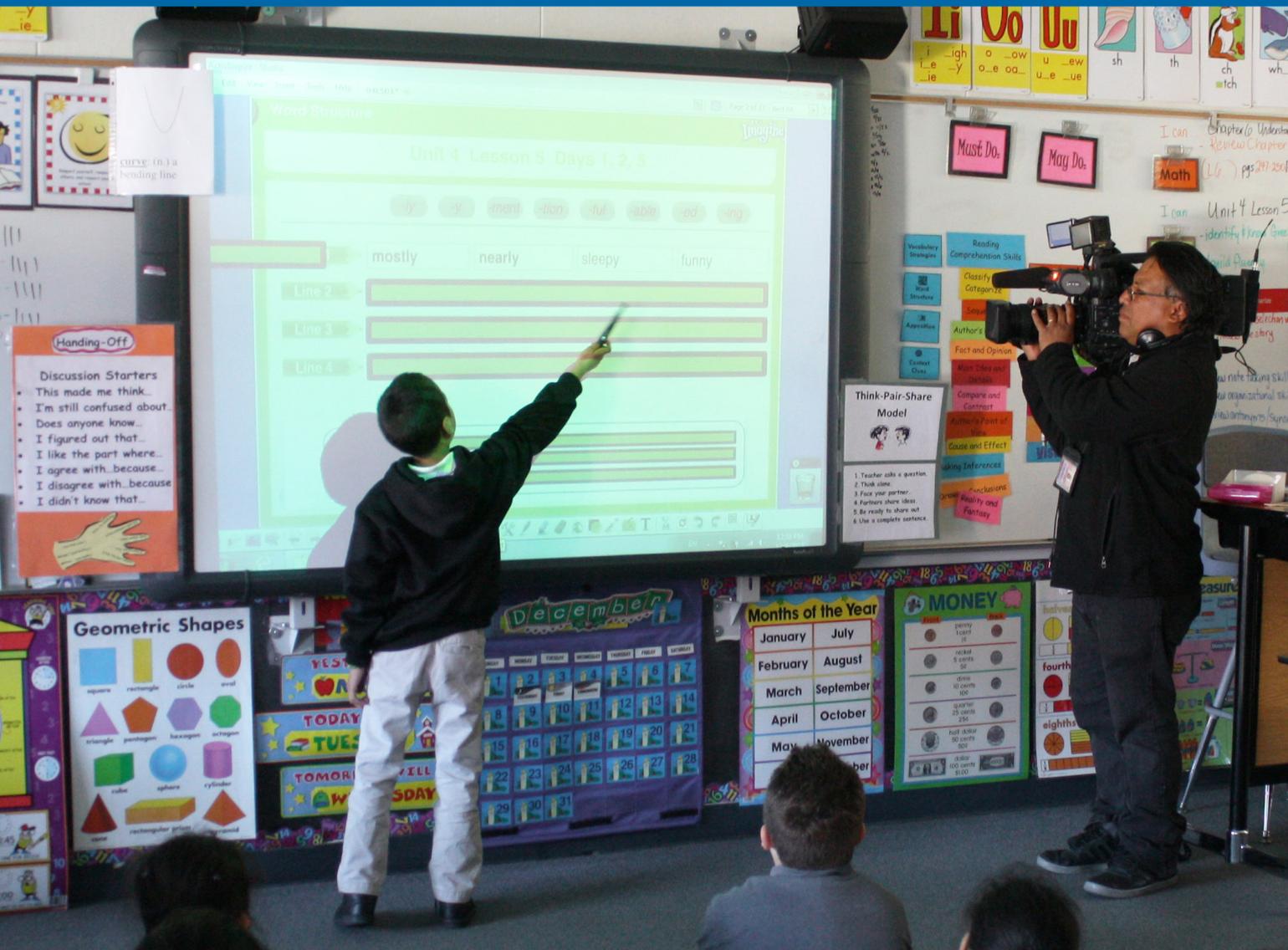


**4:00
P.M.**

Early prepares to go home. "A lot of the problems I deal with are on a societal level," she muses. "It trickles down to the school, and we try and fix it. Sometimes they come back years later and tell me I made a difference. For me, that's the best part of the job."

CTA & You

Member-driven actions, conferences, benefits and all things CTA



“QEIA is leading the way for helping teachers. It’s helping our students, it’s helping our future, it’s helping our community.”

CESAR CHAVEZ ELEMENTARY TEACHER LAURA SOLIS MORA SAYS THE CTA-BACKED QUALITY EDUCATION INVESTMENT ACT HAS SPARKED TREMENDOUS ACADEMIC GAINS AT HER LOW-INCOME SAN JOSE SCHOOL AND PAID FOR CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY LIKE INTERACTIVE WHITEBOARDS. READ ABOUT NEW QEIA RESEARCH SHARED AT A CTA SYMPOSIUM ON PAGE 49.

Small chapters do BIG things

Does size matter? Not for members in CTA's smallest local chapters. Advocacy to help students and improve working and learning conditions looks a little different. Listen in as members from small chapters talk about their big accomplishments.

CURTIS CREEK FACULTY ASSOCIATION: MEETING STUDENTS' NEEDS, PROMOTING STUDENTS' WORK

COMPILED BY DINA MARTIN

WHAT BEGAN AS a student art project to thank firefighters for their valiant work in the Sierra Rim Fire in August turned into a beautiful calendar that has raised several thousand dollars for Curtis Creek School in Sonora. But that's just the latest of several big ideas to come out of the Curtis Creek Faculty Association, which represents 27 teachers in this one-school district in the Sierra Mother Lode. We sat down with Liz Miller, GATE coordinator and CCFA president, and Colleen Whitlock, science teacher in grades 6-8, to talk about the school's recent successes.

What's the advantage of being a small chapter?

LIZ: You can get more people involved in projects. We have six to seven teachers in every department, so we can pretty much involve everybody. Probably our biggest change was expanding our science program three years ago so that grades 1-8 have it every day. We had a memorandum of understanding with the district when we went through the financial spiral and the district closed a smaller school. Part of what we did to help the district was go to one bus run. When that contract expired, teachers expressed a desire for students to have a longer academic day. Kids now stay longer at school, so we were able to add science as another period.

COLLEEN: Our entire staff has had science training. We actually worked our science teaching into our Mission and Vision Statement. Six teachers are involved in TCATS, a three-year California Mathematics and Science Partnership grant. This grant provides professional development for teachers to improve math and science instruction. Previously we had three additional teachers involved in K-2 STARTS, a four-year California Postsecondary Education Commission grant to improve teacher quality in science.

LIZ: Our primary science teacher worked as a teacher at Yosemite Valley School for 20 years, and our fourth- and fifth-grade science teacher started her career as a wildlife biologist. Colleen got a Honeywell grant and went to Huntsville, Alabama, to train as an astronaut for a week. We even incorporate science standards into our literature unit and our school garden. We also have a local artist in residence, Tracy Knopf, who worked with the students on a school wildlife mural.

COLLEEN: Last year five teachers wrote a grant for professional development from CSU Chico for \$30,000 to research a problem, talk about what we are going to do, and address it by collecting data. Because we are a Title I school, we wanted to find ways to use science to reach lower-socioeconomic kids who have high absentee rates. When we are doing those hands-on activities, kids tend to want to come to school. So we're seeing if that correlates to the attendance rate.



Colleen Whitlock and Liz Miller. Courtesy photo.

Is there anything unique about your school culture?

COLLEEN: We're a very small town. And we know all the kids. It's really neat when I walk through the school and the eighth-grade students are all going up and hugging their kindergarten and first-grade teachers. We have a monthly assembly that involves the whole school and a Family Science Night where all the kids participate. Whatever we have, all the kids are involved and the older kids help out the younger kids.

Tell us about Rim Fire Reflections.

LIZ: Our school was only six miles from the fire, and we were closed for a week. When we came back, we decided to do something for first responders. I asked our muralist to do an art class for the older kids called Rim Fire Reflections and incorporate art and poetry. This was never intended to be a fundraiser and never intended to be a calendar. Long story short, the watercolors were phenomenal, and the combination of the poetry did a double punch because we all went through it. When we decided to create a calendar, I added photographs and Rim Fire facts.

And it's taken off.

LIZ: We're in 40 businesses, we've had an article in the Modesto Bee and in the Sonora Union Democrat. The student artists are going to Yosemite National Park to make a presentation to the park supervisors, and the local Sonora Area Foundation and Tuolumne County Arts Alliance are paying for the framing of the art going with them. A nonprofit organization in San Francisco, Wholly H2O, wants to showcase the students' art to educate people about the watershed. I couldn't ever imagine that this would happen!

To find out more or to purchase a calendar for \$10 plus shipping, go to www.rimfirecalendar.com.

Lennox teachers and administrators plan for the transition to the Common Core State Standards. Photo by Frank Wells.



LENNOX TEACHERS ASSOCIATION: DETERMINING HOW CCSS IS IMPLEMENTED

COMPILED BY FRANK WELLS

THE LENNOX TEACHERS ASSOCIATION has taken a leadership role on Common Core State Standards (CCSS) implementation in the Lennox School District. Just weeks after negotiating a memorandum of understanding that gives LTA a powerful voice in determining how Common Core funds allocated in the state budget are spent, LTA invited CTA Instruction and Professional Development (IPD) staff in for a planning session on the transition to the new standards. At that session, we sat down with LTA President Brian Guerrero and first vice president and bargaining chair Polo Marquez to discuss their association's efforts to have a strong teacher core. We started off by asking them about the MOU, which establishes a teacher member majority to oversee the CCSS rollout and determine funding expenditures for the district.

POLO: The district was pretty receptive to our initial proposal — they had four minor changes, but the overall concepts were agreed to pretty easily. We're going to be able to keep these decisions teacher-driven, including making sure our charter school LTA members are included in discussions around Common Core.



Polo Marquez

BRIAN: It really is a fantastic opportunity for Lennox teachers. CTA's been great on this. Some of our members went to the IPD Common Core Strand at Summer Institute, and we were able to learn from other chapters like San Juan that have been out in front of this issue.

POLO: We also surveyed our members, asking them how they would like to see teachers involved, what

support they think they need to implement the Common Core effectively, and whether they would be interested in optional paid in-services over winter or summer breaks. We left it pretty open, as we want to hear all the ideas out there.

BRIAN: This is part of a larger organizing plan that includes building internal and external capacity. We're going to be holding site visits at every school on the Common Core and the Local Control Funding Formula. We also feel it's important that parents are informed about the new standards, so we're going to be holding small group meetings for parents to talk about this and the whole LCFF starting in January. This is part of an ongoing parent involvement effort; we've already had house meetings around other issues.

POLO: We have a lot going on. The member education piece comes first. I'm not sure everyone knows enough about this yet, and the site visits will partly be about making sure members understand what's different about student expectations and thinking skills under the new standards. Also, many of our students come from limited-income families. A lot of them have cellphones, but access to computers and the Internet is limited, and technology is an essential part of the new assessments.



Brian Guerrero

BRIAN: The district has already started working on infrastructure using some prior federal funding. The committee will be looking at those issues, but also focusing on the best way to utilize funding. There are textbook companies with prepackaged trainings around Common Core, but there may be better ways to prepare. We want to take a look at what we already have, how it fits with Common Core, and then have our members lead the way on training and implementation that make sense. Having teachers driving reform makes sense. The success of the QEIA program here in Lennox and across the state has demonstrated that teacher-driven professional development and regular teacher-led collaboration are hugely effective in bringing about better instruction and higher student achievement. I think this can be a model for us all as we shift to the Common Core and LCFF.



THE CTA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Hear history-makers' stories
at cta.org/oralhistory

CTA'S 150TH ANNIVERSARY celebration is winding down, but the story continues. You can read and hear about CTA's story online as part of a growing collection of audio stories in CTA's Oral History Project. Nearly 50 interviews are complete, of which 14 are posted online, and plans call for the archive to continue to grow.

Hear our vivid labor history from some of the people who lived it. Experience historic moments in CTA history via interviews with people who made a difference for our students, schools and communities. Interviews were conducted throughout California by former CTA Region III Manager Robin Rose and CTA Communications staff member Mike Myslinski. Here are a few you'll find.



JEAN REICHE: Jean Reiche taught for 25 years, retiring in 1989. The former president of the Santa Barbara Teachers

Association now lives in Vista Del Monte, a retirement facility in Santa Barbara that CTA's former Southern Section built and once owned exclusively for educators in the 1960s. She chose to live there because of the facility's past CTA roots as an affordable haven for retired educators.

"Since I'm now living here, I appreciate the fact that, in the 1960s, they foresaw the desirability of having a retirement community that teachers knew that they would enjoy and be happy coming here."



ED FOGLIA: Ed Foglia was CTA president in 1988 when educators mobilized statewide to pass the landmark Proposition 98 ballot measure, which guarantees K-12 schools and community colleges at least 40 percent of state revenues. No longer could the state siphon off major portions of school funding for other purposes. The victory affirmed CTA as a major political force for students and the teaching profession.

"For the first time, ... the constitution said that schools should have first call on the dollars. Proposition 98 made that possible. And now, the politicians had to come to us."



LOIS TINSON: CTA's first ethnic minority president, serving from 1995 to 1999, Lois Tinson was a gifted educator. She died in 2003 after a long illness. But in a CTA history video she had made, she recalled CTA's fight for smaller class sizes, which convinced Gov. Pete Wilson to sign the Class Size Reduction Program legislation in 1996.

"It's been incredible what has happened. Almost 90 percent of the time, what has happened, we've been on the defense, but most of the time we come out victoriously because we have teachers who care, who will stand up and say it."



BARBARA E. KERR: CTA president from 2003 to 2007, Barbara E. Kerr is known for showdowns with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the defeat of his reckless Propositions 74, 75 and 76 in 2005. On her watch, CTA also won a lawsuit victory to recover billions owed to schools, which led to the creation of the landmark Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) in 2006, providing reforms for at-risk students.

"I think about QEIA as my most important legacy. That's where real forward thinking and real help for students — that's where it is. Beating the governor was a heck of a lot of fun. It saved us; it didn't move us forward. QEIA moved us forward."



PAULA MONROE: Paula Monroe, a school secretary in Redlands who also served on the NEA Executive Committee, was the catalyst that prompted the 2006 CTA State Council vote to give full membership rights to education support professionals. The historic vote added 5,000 paraprofessionals, office workers, custodians and other ESP to the CTA family.

"[The vote] really was a validation ... and realized the value of everyone on the education team working together for student success, and how important all of our jobs are."



DAVID A. SANCHEZ: The first Latino president of CTA, David A. Sanchez served from 2007

to 2011. His term saw the rise of the Great Recession, massive school layoffs and funding cuts. He recalls CTA's statewide "Pink Friday" and "State of Emergency" campaigns; during the latter 2011 effort, he was arrested for civil disobedience in Sacramento, along with other educators. He recounts how educators helped elect Jerry Brown governor in 2010, despite Meg Whitman's spending \$150 million of her own money to oppose him.

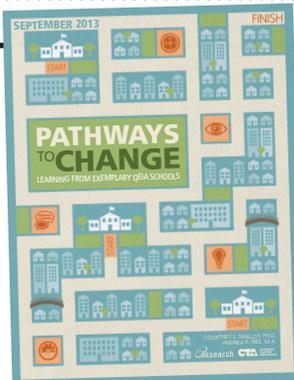
"We knew that if Meg Whitman were to be elected governor of California, it would have a horrendous impact on our students and on public education throughout the entire state. ... We knew that our students had a much better chance of getting what they really needed under the leadership of Jerry Brown."



Go Online

cta.org/ctahistory

Besides the Oral History Project, you can find a wealth of material celebrating CTA's 150-year history.



THE PATHWAY TO SUCCESS

The new research report, based on data from stakeholders at 10 QEIA-supported schools, offers several key pathways to change:

Reducing class sizes: Smaller class sizes “opened the door to instructional opportunities that would not exist otherwise,” the research found. It paved the way for differentiated instruction, increased small group teaching and time for reteaching, and provided more one-on-one time with students.

Leveraging collaboration time: Educators used vital collaboration time to plan together, align instruction and share practice tips that work.

Responding to student needs: QEIA program resources showed stakeholders “the significance of changing school structures to find more instructional time for student intervention,” such as adjusting master schedules, providing intensive tutoring, and grouping students according to their learning needs for reteaching.

Building local accountability: To improve a school, teachers, administrators, parents and students must all understand they’re “responsible for the effectiveness of teaching and learning.”

Recognizing and rewarding students: A few QEIA schools found that publicly rewarding students for academic success actually changed the culture of the school and sparked a better academic focus.

Using student data to intervene: Using student data effectively leads to timely interventions and greater awareness of student needs.

Strengthening school leadership: Highly effective principals “infused schools with new ideas” and supported plans to use collaboration as a force for change.

QEIA studies show more at-risk student success

Once low-performing schools uncover pathways for change

STORY AND PHOTOS BY MIKE MYSLINSKI

➤ **CALIFORNIA'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS** of greatest need have great lessons to share that all schools can learn from.

New research shows dramatic gains in academic performance for California schools with at-risk students that reduced class sizes, provided more time for teachers to collaborate and share ideas, and focused on classroom data to improve student learning.

This latest research was unveiled Nov. 7 at a lively CTA symposium in Sacramento about the CTA-backed Quality Education Investment Act (QEIA) of 2006. Some 160 educators, parents and administrators from QEIA-supported schools shared notes and listened to colleagues’ revelations about what can work everywhere.

State Superintendent Tom Torlakson and CTA President Dean E. Vogel noted how proven reforms are working despite high poverty and other challenges facing the campuses supported by QEIA resources.

“As evidence continues to grow that the reforms we enabled with QEIA have been successful, it’s time for the next step — spreading those successes to more and more schools,” Torlakson said. “Every student in California deserves to graduate with the experience, knowledge and skills they need to succeed in college and careers.”

He said this school improvement program is showing the public how revenue should be spent. “This grand experiment with QEIA points the way to how we can invest those dollars: lowering class sizes (go figure!), more counselors helping students with the problems they have.” These reforms are working. “This offers a great pathway on several fronts on how we can invest in a stronger education for all California’s students.”

The largest school turnaround program of its kind in the nation, the internationally acclaimed QEIA is investing nearly \$3 billion over eight years in 400 high-pov-



Participants in a QEIA symposium panel were (from left) CTA staff moderator **Jane Robb**, educators **Dean McGee** (not visible), **Jeanne Contreras**, **Noah King** and **David Nevarez**, and parent **Maria Ponce**.



State Superintendent Tom Torlakson and CTA President **Dean Vogel** confer at CTA's Nov. 7 QEIA symposium.

Stakeholders stressed five common features of their schools that helped them mitigate roadblocks and improve student learning: exemplary leadership, a common vision, willingness to change and innovate, ongoing and open communication, and “relentless drive and dedication.”

All stakeholders — administrators, parents, teachers — must have a shared commitment and willingness to change

erty schools for proven reforms like smaller class sizes, more high school counselors, and better teacher training. The funding came from the settlement of a CTA lawsuit against former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger over money the state owed to public schools.

Vogel said QEIA demonstrates CTA's support for our students of greatest need. He noted that discoveries at QEIA schools can offer ideas for Local Control Funding Formula spending by school districts that must target at-risk students.

“The new research shows that lessons learned from exemplary QEIA schools should be shared. Teachers, principals and other stakeholders are saying that reforms like giving educators more collaboration time, building community accountability, reducing class sizes, and using student data to intervene are pathways to school improvement that many can follow.”

Symposium panelists included educators and a parent from Harmon Johnson Elementary in Sacramento, which is prospering from QEIA-funded smaller class sizes, better staff training and new computer labs. This Twin Rivers Unified School District campus also

won a high-profile national award for excellence. Panelist Richard Carrazana, a sixth-grade teacher there, says QEIA enabled Harmon Johnson to purchase enough computers to open two labs.

“These computer labs are helping to prepare students for Common Core,” Carrazana said. “I couldn't be happier with QEIA for giving our kids this access to technology. We feel this is going to help close the achievement gap for our low-income students. QEIA is providing resources many of our students don't have at home. Thanks to this program, our reach as teachers is now beyond the classroom.”

Symposium panelists shared QEIA success stories from many public schools, which all enjoy higher Academic Performance Index (API) scores despite high poverty rates. The state's goal is an API score of 800 for all schools; however, it should be noted that this is not the only determinant of success or learning.

While no QEIA schools are named in the new research report, the conclusions of stakeholders interviewed about how to overcome roadblocks to change might sound familiar if your school is enjoying the camaraderie that teamwork can build.

for the common goal of student success, teachers at these highly effective schools told researchers.

“First, we have to get everybody to decide that there's a need for it,” one teacher told the researchers about recognizing problems. “Then, we're more open to changing our ways. And that's always the hardest part of changing human nature.”

Another teacher added: “You have to have a common goal, and the goal should be to move the school forward, making sure of setting up kids for success.”



Go Online

cta.org/qeia

Read highlights of the latest research in “Pathways to Change: Learning From Exemplary QEIA Schools.” This is the second of five independent research reports about QEIA schools that will be done over the next year by the firm Vital Research of Los Angeles. The first report, “Cultivating Change in Schools,” is also available.



WATCH QEIA PANEL DISCUSSIONS ON VIDEO

CANDID WORDS OF WISDOM about best practices were captured on video by CTA, and that's a good thing for any educator who wants to learn more about shaking up school structures and meeting student needs.

These nine educators and a parent from QEIA-supported low-income schools shared their experiences at CTA's Nov. 7 QEIA symposium during two revealing panel discussions of less than one hour each. You can listen to their insightful comments on class sizes, teacher collaboration, parental involvement, building local accountability, and other crucial topics on two videos posted at www.cta.org/qeia (just scroll down to the bottom of that page). Also, watch a video in which researcher Courtney Malloy of Vital Research discusses the lessons learned from QEIA.

The symposium panelists were:

Panel 1: *Structures for School Success*

- **JEANNE CONTRERAS**, Teacher, Gulf Avenue Elementary (Los Angeles USD)
- **NOAH KING**, Teacher, Marilyn Avenue Elementary (Livermore Valley Joint USD)
- **DEAN MCGEE**, Principal, West High School (Kern High School District)
- **DAVID NEVAREZ**, Principal, Harmon Johnson Elementary (Twin Rivers USD)
- **MARIA PONCE**, Parent, Harmon Johnson Elementary (Twin Rivers USD)

Panel 2: *Changing Classroom Practices: Meeting Student Needs*

- **RICHARD CARRAZANA**, Teacher, Harmon Johnson Elementary (Twin Rivers USD)
- **YESSENIA DIAZ-HUERTA**, Teacher, Ernest Geddes Elementary (Baldwin Park USD)
- **CHRIS JUNG**, Teacher, Columbia School (El Monte City Elementary District)
- **GLORIA RODRIGUEZ**, Teacher, Evergreen Elementary (East Whittier Elementary District)
- **GABRIELA TAVITIAN**, Principal, Evergreen Elementary (East Whittier City School District)

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Calendar

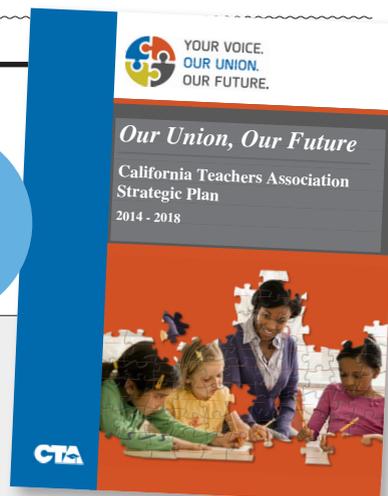
January
7

See our upcoming events at cta.org/calendar

JANUARY 7 *Conference call*

Telephone Town Hall

CTA members may participate in one of two Telephone Town Hall meetings on Jan. 7 at 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to discuss CTA's proposed Strategic Plan, "Our Union, Our Future," which State Council will vote on later in January. Read the plan and learn about CTA's strategic planning process at www.cta.org/ourfuture. Register to join the conference call at www.cta.org/townhall.



JANUARY 7 *Nomination deadline*

CTA Human Rights Awards

Past Human Rights Award winners helped protect civil rights of educators and students, taught about extremists who threaten the rights of others, promoted educational opportunity for physically or mentally challenged students, eradicated discrimination within the profession, and improved intergroup relations. Any active CTA member, chapter, caucus or Service Center Council may nominate a member, chapter or Service Center Council. Find out more: www.cta.org/humanrightsawards

JANUARY 10 *Entry deadline*

César E. Chávez Awards

The César E. Chávez Memorial Education Awards Program provides recognition for students who submit visual arts projects or written essays that show an understanding of César E. Chávez's vision and guiding principles. Winners will receive recognition and up to \$550 for both students and sponsoring CTA members. Submitters of a group entry (up to three students) will share the prize. Find out more: www.cta.org/scholarships

JANUARY 10–12 *Conference*

Good Teaching Conference North | Fairmont Hotel, San Jose

CTA's Good Teaching Conferences support excellent teaching and learning practices for classroom teachers. Offering a variety of diverse workshops in curriculum content areas for K-12 teachers, the conferences provide opportunities for professional development and offer time to network and share ideas with colleagues and experts in the field. Find out more: www.cta.org/conferences

JANUARY 17–19 *Conference*

Issues Conference | Rio All-Suite Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada

"Be the Change — Our Voice, Our Union, Our Profession!" This conference provides an opportunity for educators from rural, urban, and ESP local chapters throughout the state to learn, share, strategize and unite together to determine the future of public education. Topics include the Local Control Funding Formula, Common Core State Standards, bargaining, health care, charter schools, special education, and economic fairness. Find out more: www.cta.org/conferences

JANUARY 31 *Filing deadline*

Candidacy for NEA state delegate

Candidates for state delegate to the Representative Assembly at the 2014 NEA convention in Denver must submit a declaration of candidacy by Friday, Jan. 31. For more information, see page 54.

FEBRUARY 7 *Application Deadline*

CTA Scholarships

2014 CTA Scholarship program applications must be postmarked by Friday, Feb. 7. There are up to 35 scholarships of \$5,000 for dependent children of CTA members, plus one scholarship for a dependent child attending a continuation high school or alternative education program. There are up to five scholarships of \$3,000 for CTA members completing college coursework, and up to three scholarships of \$5,000 for Student CTA members. Find out more: www.cta.org/scholarships

FEBRUARY 21 *Application Deadline*

Martin Luther King Jr. Scholarships

Aimed at helping members of ethnic minorities in preparing for teaching-related careers in public education, the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarship Fund is supported by voluntary contributions from CTA members and the CTA Foundation for Teaching and Learning. An applicant must be an active CTA or Student CTA member, or a dependent child of a CTA member. Find out more: www.cta.org/mlkscholarships

MARCH 7–9 *Conference*

NEA ESP Conference | San Francisco Marriott Marquis Hotel

The premier professional development opportunity for education support professionals across the nation, this conference offers more than 50 hands-on workshops on a variety of topics, including three workshops on the Common Core State Standards. Registration is open until Jan. 31. Find out more: www.nea.org/espconference

Declaration of Candidacy For CTA/NEA-Retired Officers

Deadline to return declaration is January 31, 2014

OFFICES TO BE FILLED:

President, Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer of CTA/NEA-Retired
Term: 2 years, beginning June 26
Requirements: A candidate must be a member of CTA/NEA-Retired.

I AM A CANDIDATE FOR THE OFFICE OF:

President Vice President Secretary-Treasurer

MY CONTACT INFORMATION: *(Please print)*

Name

Home address

Mailing address

City & Zip

City & Zip

Home phone

Cellphone

Email

MY CAMPAIGN STATEMENT: *As a candidate for CTA/NEA-Retired officer,* you may write a candidate statement of no more than 35 words, which will be included with the ballot. If more words are used, the statement will include only the first 35. Reference to ethnic minority identification will not be counted in the 35-word limitation.

Date

Signature

This form must be received no later than 5 p.m. Jan. 31, 2014

Mail to CTA/NEA-Retired Elections, 333 Hatch Drive, Foster City, CA 94404. **Candidates may wish to return this form by certified mail in order to get a receipt and ensure compliance with the deadline.**

CTA/NEA-Retired to elect officers

Jan. 31 is the deadline to submit nominations for CTA/NEA-Retired state officers.

Anyone wishing to run for a position should complete the Declaration of Candidacy form (left) and return it to the address on the form.

Terms, which begin June 26, are two years for state officers.

The ballot, including names of the candidates and their campaign statements, will be mailed to members in February. For more information, call (650) 577-5150.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS

Following are the electoral districts for CTA/NEA-Retired.

Retired District 1

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

Retired District 2

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

Retired District 3

Los Angeles	Santa Barbara
San Luis Obispo	Ventura

Retired District 4

Imperial	Riverside
Inyo	San Bernardino
Mono	San Diego
Orange	

CTA Service Center Council addresses

You can represent CTA at NEA's convention

ON THE FACING PAGE is the official Declaration of Candidacy form for state delegates to the 2014 NEA convention in Denver.

Declaration of Candidacy forms for state delegates are also available on the CTA website (www.cta.org/racandidacy). They are not being circulated through any other channels. Chapter presidents will not be distributing these forms to chapter members. It is the responsibility of each member wishing to run for state delegate to fill out the Declaration of Candidacy form that is printed in this issue (or photocopy) or downloaded from the website, and file it by the deadline.

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

In order to attend the Representative Assembly, you must pay for your meals, hotel room and transportation for June 30–July 7.

The first caucus meeting is set for July 1, and the annual meeting of the Representative Assembly runs July 3–6. CTA will reimburse state delegates up to \$1,850 with appropriate receipts. If a delegate stays within the CTA meal allowance, shares a room with another delegate and purchases a saver airline ticket (if applicable), the CTA reimbursement should cover delegate expenses.

In keeping with CTA's commitment to minority involvement, members who are ethnic minorities are urged to become candidates.

For more information, or if your chapter has not initiated an election by April 4, 2014, contact the Elections Committee through CTA Governance Support, P.O. Box 921, Burlingame, CA 94011-0921; 650-552-5300.

Service Center Council	Counties	Service Center Council	Counties	Service Center Council	Counties
ALCOSTA 2177 Diamond Blvd. Concord, CA 94520 925-676-2822 925-676-2915 (fax)	Alameda, Contra Costa	GOLDEN GATE 333 Hatch Dr. Foster City, CA 94404 650-577-5150 650-577-5160 (fax)	San Mateo, San Francisco	SERVICE CENTER ONE 1333 S. Mayflower Ave., Ste. 150 Monrovia, CA 91016 626-357-2095 626-357-2451 (fax)	Los Angeles, San Bernardino
BAY VALLEY 6095 Bristol Parkway, Ste. 100 Culver City, CA 90230-6601 310-215-0326 310-215-0341 (fax)	Los Angeles	HIGH DESERT 9329 Mariposa Rd., Ste. 215 Hesperia, CA 92344-8086 760-244-2239 760-244-1665 (fax)	Inyo, Kern, Los Angeles, Mono, San Bernardino	SHASTA CASCADE 760 Cypress Ave., Ste. 301 Redding, CA 96001 530-243-5623 530-243-5813 (fax)	Lassen, Modoc, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama, Trinity
CAPITAL 4100 Truxel Rd. Sacramento, CA 95834 916-288-4923 916-288-4912 (fax)	Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Placer, Sacramento, Tuolumne, Yolo	IMPERIAL COUNTY 2419 La Brucherie Rd. Imperial, CA 92251 760-355-4600 760-355-0906 (fax)	Imperial, San Diego (Borrego Springs)	SIERRA 3409 Calloway Dr., #201 Bakersfield, CA 93312 661-587-1366 661-587-1365 (fax)	Kern
CENTRAL COAST COUNTIES 928 E. Blanco Rd., Ste. 100 Salinas, CA 93901 831-783-3200 831-783-3211 (fax)	Monterey, San Benito, Santa Cruz, So. Santa Clara	MERCED/MARIPOSA 510 W. Main St., Ste. E Merced, CA 95340 209-723-8871 209-723-9598 (fax)	Merced, Mariposa	SOUTHEASTERN 11745 E. Telegraph Rd. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 562-478-1346 562-478-1432 (fax)	Los Angeles
CHANNEL ISLANDS 1930 Outlet Center Dr. Oxnard, CA 93036 805-485-1706 805-485-1658 (fax)	San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura	ORANGE 281 N. Rampart St., Ste. A Orange, CA 92868 714-978-8861 714-978-2423 (fax)	Orange	STANISLAUS 3900 Mitchell Rd. Ceres, CA 95307 209-537-0702 209-537-4049 (fax)	Stanislaus
CHICO 1430 East Ave. #1 Chico, CA 95926 530-345-9743 530-345-1839 (fax)	Butte, Glenn, Plumas	REDWOOD 4300 Redwood Hwy., Ste. 200 San Rafael, CA 94903 415-479-6616 415-479-6435 (fax)	Del Norte, Humboldt, Lake, Marin, Mendocino, Napa, Solano, Sonoma	TULARE/KINGS 301 W. School Ave. Visalia, CA 93291 559-733-7706 559-739-7863 (fax)	Kings, Tulare
DELTA 7330 West Ln., Ste. 3 Stockton, CA 95210 209-478-6091 209-478-5923 (fax)	San Joaquin	SAN DIEGO COUNTY 5333 Mission Center Rd., Ste. 200 San Diego, CA 92108 619-683-3990 619-683-3994 (fax)	San Diego	UTLA/NEA 3303 Wilshire Blvd., 10th Fl. Los Angeles, CA 90010 213-368-6259 213-251-9891 (fax)	Los Angeles
FEATHER RIVER 950 Tharp Rd., Ste. 901 Yuba City, CA 95993 530-755-2082 530-755-0641 (fax)	Colusa, Nevada, Sierra, Sutter, Yuba	SAN GORGONIO 430 E. Vanderbilt Way San Bernardino, CA 92408 909-890-4520 909-890-2461 (fax)	Riverside, San Bernardino	HIGHER EDUCATION 4100 Truxel Rd. Sacramento, CA 95834 916-288-4921 916-288-4911 (fax)	2-year and 4-year colleges and universities
FRESNO/MADERA 5330 N. Fresno St. Fresno, CA 93710 559-222-6593 559-222-9827 (fax)	Fresno, Madera	SANTA CLARA COUNTY 4810 Harwood Rd. #100 San Jose, CA 95124 408-266-1321 408-266-7893 (fax)	Santa Clara		



Word Find

You asked. Here it is. Find the words that are events or are related to events in December and January. Each word lies in a straight line left, right, up, down or diagonally.

Y D N A C X G S E I P W H S Y Y M L E X
 R O R E T N I W U B N W K Y G F A B R D
 A K K S E L D N A C P E P L I A R O E U
 S H Q K X F J E A F Y O C L H M T X T L
 P A U O K T Z R R P I H C O R I I I N R
 I K D L T R O I I N I D U H V L N N I I
 R K O G X L E G S L S N D O M Y L G W S
 I U S J I N N E D Z Q U D P I I U D V H
 T N O N D I T R Q G I T L S S E T A M T
 Q A G S V T E C E G T S E T T U H Y A A
 W H K I I N F P B N R T U N L W E W W E
 S H G A C K W A N Z A A P A E U R A L R
 D S Q M P K P D O Z D Y D E T Y K N I W
 R O D E W I T V R D I Z A G O E I X D C
 A S T N T M E Y N R T H Y A E K N S A E
 C H J N E M C S A E I K A P I A G T N C
 K O M C L I D P M I O V T R S B U F N I
 S P Y R I G R W E D N E Z R O D X I A T
 U P W O R G V F N E S A T H D N D G B S
 Q I N Q J T Y U T L R I B B O N E I I L
 T N N B O F S W S E I R O M E M M M O O
 B G M S T H G I L F O L A V I T S E F S

BAKE
 BOXING DAY
 CANDLES
 CANDY
 CARDS
 CAROLING
 CHILDREN
 CUDDLE UP DAY
 DREIDEL

FAMILY
 FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS
 FRIENDS
 GIFTS
 GIVING
 HANUKKAH
 HOLLY
 JOY
 KWANZAA

MARTIN LUTHER KING
 MAWLID AN-NABI
 MEMORIES
 MENORAH
 MISTLETOE
 NUTS
 ORNAMENTS
 PAGEANTS
 PIES

POINSETTIA
 RIBBON
 SHOPPING
 SOLSTICE
 SPIRIT
 TAGS
 TRADITIONS
 WINTER
 WREATHS

Continuing Education for Educators

BUILD NEW SKILLS AND
Be a Changemaker

SIGN UP TODAY!

Online Fixed-Date Courses

Starting **Jan. 7** or **Feb. 25** have fixed start and finish dates similar to classroom courses, typically with assignments due each week.

- ▶ **Professional Teachers Program** – Improve Classroom Practices (16 courses)
- ▶ **Classroom Resolutions** – Refine Your Classroom Management Skills to Promote Learning for All (3 of 4 courses offered)
- ▶ **Character Education Specialist** – Bring Social and Emotional Learning to Your Classroom and School (4 courses offered)
- ▶ **Bullying Prevention in Our Schools** – Address this Common Issue at Your School (4 courses offered)
- ▶ **Mental Health First Aid** – Become Knowledgeable and Prepared to Deal with Mental Health Issues that Affect Our Students and Schools (2 of 5 courses offered)
- ▶ **Teacher Leader** – Add Leadership Skills to Your Resume (5 courses)
- ▶ **Mobile Technology Learning** – Lead the Way in Your School or District with Mobile Technology (4 courses offered)

COMING SOON!

Online Self-Paced Summer Offering:
EDU-X774K
Developing Custom Curriculum Solutions for Your Classroom - 3 units
New and Improved!

Cutting-Edge K-12 Curriculum

AFFORDABLE | CONVENIENT | RELEVANT



ENROLL ANYTIME IN ONE OF UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO'S
NEW **Online Self-Paced & Independent Study Courses*

Online Self-Paced courses are a perfect blend of accessibility, convenience and flexibility for you to control your learning pace. Register at any time and have six months to complete your course.

NEW! Flipping Classroom Instruction Professional Program

Bring Technology into Your 21st Century Classroom

- ▶ Flipping Classroom Instruction with Technology
- ▶ Technology Tools for Empowering Students

NEW! Common Core Standards Series/English Language Arts and Mathematics

Explore How You Can Bring the Common Core State Standards Into Your Teaching

- ▶ Introduction and Unpacking – Elementary and Secondary courses available in ELA & Mathematics
- ▶ Curriculum Design and Lesson Planning – Elementary, Middle School, and High School courses available in ELA & Mathematics
- ▶ Assessments – Elementary, Middle School, and High School courses available in ELA & Mathematics

Independent Study courses offer flexibility and the ability to complete a course faster than a traditional live course. Register at any time and have up to nine months to complete your course.

NEW! Read, Empower, Act, Discover (R.E.A.D.) Series

Promote Continuous Improvement and Professional Development with Reading

These courses are designed for those that enjoy learning from reading and who want to start a critical dialogue with today's issues and concerns that affect our schools.

Featured books include:

- ▶ Curriculum 21: Essential Education for a Changing World
- ▶ Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking
- ▶ The Technology Toolbelt for Teaching
- ▶ Eats, Shoots & Leaves: The Zero Tolerance Approach to Punctuation
- ▶ English Learners Academic Literacy and Thinking: Learning in the Challenge Zone
- ▶ Getting Started with Rigorous Curriculum Design: How School Districts Are Successfully Redesigning their Curricula for the Common Core
- ▶ And many more!

MANY OTHER INDEPENDENT
STUDY OFFERINGS FOUND AT

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CONTINUING EDUCATION

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Prior district approval for salary advancement units is recommended and the responsibility of each student.



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