

california
educator

DECEMBER 2023 / JANUARY 2024 VOLUME 28 ISSUE 3

*Build an
Inclusive
Classroom*

PAGE 23

**FRESNO'S
HISTORIC
CONTRACT**

PAGE 16



**Teacher
Quality:
A Better Way
Than the TPA**

PAGE 26

Our New Year's Resolution: Vote

Get informed and engaged for the March Primary **PAGE 31**

Make more moments.

Get rolling with the only Disability insurance plan endorsed by CTA.



You deserve an insurance plan that has your back, **so you can focus on what's ahead.**

- ☑ CTA-endorsed Disability insurance replaces up to 80% of paychecks if members miss work due to illness, injury, pregnancy or childbirth.¹
- ☑ The CTA-endorsed plan gives you exclusive access to the Student Loan Benefit, Cancer Benefit and new Summer Benefit² at no additional cost.

For opportunities to apply with no health questions asked, visit:

CTAMemberBenefits.org/Disability



¹ For disabilities occurring prior to September 1, 2022, you will receive up to 75% of your regular daily salary, less any sources of deductible income, while you continue to be disabled. For disabilities occurring on or after September 1, 2022, you will receive up to 80% of your regular daily salary, less any sources of deductible income, while you continue to be disabled.

² Summer Benefit is offered by CTA to eligible members who meet additional specific criteria during the months of June and July. CTA provides this benefit at no extra cost, and The Standard acts as the claims administrator of this benefit. Summer Benefit is not provided under the Voluntary Disability insurance policy.

For costs and further details of the coverage, including exclusions, benefit waiting periods, 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. Standard Insurance Company, 1100 SW Sixth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204 GP190-LTD/S399/CTA.1 GP190-LIFE/S399/CTA.3

california educator

VOLUME 28 ISSUE 3



#WeAreCTA

OUR VOICE, OUR UNION, OUR PROFESSION

WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW

MAGAZINE

AN EXCELLENT EDUCATOR

Meet the recipient of the NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. **PAGE 14**

INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Three exemplary educators show how they do it. **PAGE 23**



TEACHER TESTS: LITTLE VALUE

The TPA is stressful, redundant and of little value to teacher prep. CTA suggests a better way. **PAGE 26**

LIT FROM WITHIN

One teacher writes kids' books based on national parks; another's hard life inspires. **PAGE 56**



DIGITAL

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

Vote with California educators in the March Presidential Primary Election. **PAGE 31**

[f](#) [X](#) [i](#) [cta.org/election](#)

BIG WIN FOR FRESNO

Fresno educators unite with parents, community and allies to win historic contract. **PAGE 16**

[f](#) [X](#) [i](#) [fb.watch/ozsr_04r09/](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLBOX

The power of highlighting your members. **PAGE 40**



CTA ON THREADS

Find and follow us at [wearecta](#) on [threads.net](#).



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

CTA SCHOLARSHIPS...

...and awards and grants. Your union can help you and your dependents succeed. **PAGE 48**

[f](#) [X](#) [i](#) [cta.org/scholarships](#)

UPDATE YOUR EXPERTISE

Master new skills and refresh old ones at CTA's Good Teaching Conference. GTC-North: Feb. 2-4; GTC-South: March 22-24. **PAGE 9**

[f](#) [X](#) [i](#) [cta.org/conferences](#)

CCA WINTER CONFERENCE

Community college advocacy, issues, trainings and more. **PAGE 9**



[cca4us.org/conferences](#)

MEMBER BENEFITS

A SEASON TO SAVE

Deals and discounts on travel, entertainment and shopping with CTA Access to Savings. **PAGE 11** [CTAMemberBenefits.org/Access](#)

SLEEP IS A SUPERPOWER

The Calm app — free to CTA members — can help you rest, relax and sleep. **PAGE 51** [CTAMemberBenefits.org/Calm](#)

Winning artwork for the 2022-2023 Chávez & Huerta Memorial Education Awards by Meilani Castillo, grades 9-12, Region 4; teacher: Amanda Lira, Temecula Valley Education Assn. Story on page 48.

16



Fresno Teachers' Unity Leads to Big Gains PAGE 16

Hartnell: The 2006 strike, and another looms PAGE 20

Rohnert Park-Cotati: A year after a pivotal strike PAGE 21

DEPARTMENTS

In the Know

- 8 Calendar
- 10 News & Notes
- 13 Quotes & Numbers

Spotlight

- 14 **NEA FOUNDATION AWARD:** Hayward teacher's excellence

Features

- 16 **BIG VICTORY:** Fresno teachers win historic contract
- 20 **HARTNELL COLLEGE:** Faculty fight for fair treatment, then and now
- 21 **LESSONS LEARNED:** Rohnert Park-Cotati's 2022 strike

Advocacy

- 31 **VOTER GUIDE:** The March Primary
- 34 **LEGISLATIVE UPDATE:** Bills that CTA co-sponsors and supports
- 35 **BEATING BACK EXTREMISTS:** Los Gatos educators unite to win
- 36 **BARGAINING:** Statewide roundup

Teaching & Learning

- 40 **SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLBOX:** Highlight your members
- 42 **GREAT MENTORS:** 5 principles

CTA & You

- 44 **STATE COUNCIL:** Fall 2023 wrap
- 46 **TEACHERS OF THE YEAR:** Kudos!
- 48 **SCHOLARSHIPS, GRANTS, AWARDS:** CTA's many programs
- 51 **CALM APP:** Sleep and relaxation
- 52 **BYLAWS:** Proposed change
- 53 **CANDIDACY:** RA state delegate
- 53 **BOARD EXPENSES:** 2022-23
- 54 **LIT FROM WITHIN:** Works by our members

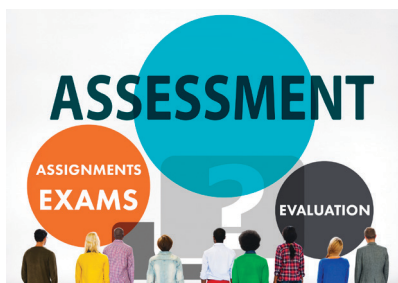
31

Your Voice Matters: Vote!

All you need to know for the Presidential Primary Election on March 5 PAGE 31



Building an Inclusive Classroom PAGE 23



Teaching Performance Assessments: A Better Way? PAGE 26

Photos, from top: One of 3,400+ Fresno Teachers Association members at a strike authorization rally in October; books from Elk Grove Education Association member Alma Galapon's fourth-grade classroom. Cover: Illustration by Skinny Ships (Richard Perez/Jennifer DeRosa).



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

▼ LHS Wellness Center Counselor and Livermore Education Association member Zach Radecke, who said in the story: "Suicide is now the second or third leading cause of death for children. We're just trying to just keep students alive, honestly"



Wellness at Livermore High

Re: "Livermore High School Leading the Way in Mental Health Support for Students," Educator digital story, which described LHS' unique Wellness Center — started based on student feedback right before the pandemic hit:

I retired from this district and am very proud of the proactiveness of its people. May others follow your lead!

NICA COX
CTA/NEA-Retired

Lesson learned:
Always check stock photos. ▼

Will History Repeat Itself?

Re: "2006 Strike Remembered as Hartnell College Faculty Fight for Professional Contract," Educator digital story as well as story on p. 20:

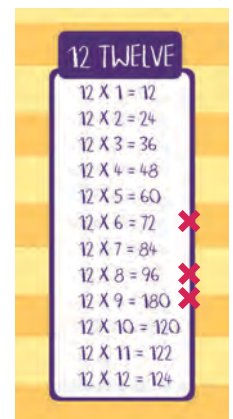
Incredible to remember the history. I read somewhere that the 2006 strike was the first community college faculty strike in 30 years? I would hate for that same college faculty to have to strike again just 17 years later. We don't want to, but we WILL... Here's to a fair, equitable contract NOW!

RIVER NAVAILLE
Hartnell College Faculty Association

Chart Corrections

On p. 49 of the Oct/Nov Educator there was an article "Charts: The Silent Teachers." Please look at the multiplication "times 12." I was surprised to see 3 mistakes.

MARCIA WEAVER
CTA/NEA-Retired



connect with us

facebook.com/wearecta
 [@WeAreCTA](https://twitter.com/WeAreCTA)

youtube.com/californiateachers
 [@WeAreCTA](https://instagram.com/WeAreCTA)

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

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

EDITOR IN CHIEF Katharine Fong
STAFF WRITER Julian Peebles
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Amy Peruzzaro
CTA SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR Elizabeth Barcelos
CTA WEB EDITOR Chris Robledo
WEB ASSISTANT Gladdie Cabral

CTA ELECTED OFFICERS

PRESIDENT David B. Goldberg
VICE PRESIDENT Leslie S. Littman
SECRETARY-TREASURER Erika Lynn Jones

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gregory T. Abt, Jesse Aguilar, Joe Bartell, Greg Bonaccorsi,
Kisha S. Borden, Denise Bradford, Christopher E. Bushée, Angela Der Ramos,
Wendy Eccles, Robert Ellis, Margie Granado, Shelly Y. Gupton, Mel House,
Taunya M. Jaco, Angela K. Normand, Mike Patterson, Eva Ruiz,
Grant Schuster, DeWayne Sheaffer, VanCedric Williams

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Joe Boyd
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Rebecca Zoglman
COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER Rachel Warino

CONTRIBUTORS

Stephen Harris, Gabriella Landeros, Cynthia Menzel,
Terry Ng, Jay Ortiz, Ed Sibby, Frank Wells

MISSION STATEMENT

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

EDITORIAL INFORMATION

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

Publication of advertising in the *California Educator* does not indicate CTA approval of the product or of the companies that purchase advertising.

For advertising rates and information, contact Carol Nettles,
Advertising Sales Representative, AdBoom Advertising, 404-347-1755
carol@adboomadvertising.com

CTA/NEA membership dues for the fiscal year (Sept. 1, 2022, to Aug. 31, 2023) are \$972, including a \$20 refundable contribution (see cta.org/contribution for details). \$22.65 of CTA annual dues is designated for CTA/ABC political activities to support state and local candidates and/or initiatives, and \$15.00 of CTA annual dues is designated for independent expenditures, totaling \$37.65 not deductible for income tax purposes. Please consult your tax adviser.

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

CALIFORNIA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

1705 Murchison Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010-4583
650-697-1400; fax 650-552-5002; editor@cta.org, cta.org

California Educator Volume 28, Issue 3, December 2023 / January 2024 *California Educator* (ISSN 1091-6148) is published in August, October, December, February, April and June by: California Teachers Association, 1705 Murchison Dr., Burlingame, CA 94010-4583. Periodicals Postage Paid at Burlingame, CA, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to *California Educator*, P.O. Box 4178, Burlingame, CA 94011-4178.

nea

CTA



Invest on your own terms

Pick-A-Term Certificate 4.75% APY*

From 3, 6, 9 and 12 months

Minimum opening deposit of \$10,000*

providentcu.org/ctapickaterm

Limited time offer!



Scan Me



©PGU 11/2023

* APY (Annual Percentage Yield) Rate effective November 1, 2023. Limited time offer. May be extended or withdrawn without notice. Membership required. Early withdrawal penalty may apply. 3, 6, 9, and 12 Month Pick-A-Term Certificates: Dividend rates are fixed for the term of the certificate and are not subject to a tiered rate. The minimum opening deposit is \$10,000. Deposits cannot be added to this certificate once it has been opened. Institutional deposits are not eligible. At maturity, the 3 Month Pick-A-Term Certificate will automatically renew to the 3 Month Pick-A-Term Certificate fixed rate. 6 Month Pick-A-Term Certificate will automatically renew to the 6 Month Pick-A-Term Certificate fixed rate and the 9 Month and 12 Month Pick-A-Term Certificates will renew to the 12 Month Pick-A-Term Certificate fixed rate in effect at that time.



Maximizing Our Strength and Solidarity



AS WE ENTER 2024 and prepare for the important work ahead of us, it's a good time to reflect on the past year, too. It's been a real thrill for me to begin my term as CTA president at a time when CTA members are accomplishing so much on so many fronts.

One thing that was proven time and time again in 2023 was the power of collective action and importance of our union. In CTA chapters throughout the state, CTA members stood up for their students and for themselves. United Teachers Los Angeles and Oakland Education Association both went on strike — UTLA in solidarity with sister union SEIU, but also to further common good bargaining goals, and Oakland to further community needs and drag lagging salaries up to a more competitive level. Other chapters such as Fresno Teachers Association, Old Adobe Teachers Association, Basset — too many to list here — all averted strikes but made historic gains through organizing and collective union action.

I'm especially proud of how many CTA chapters worked hard (and continue to do so) to make Community Schools such a success. California is making a historic investment in Community Schools, and many of our chapters have been involved in local Community Schools efforts from the ground up and have been the driving force leading district involvement. Others have had to stand up to district administrators who think they can apply for Community School funding and begin planning without involving educators, parents and students in the shared decision-making model that is the basis for these schools in the first place. Those districts, once they correct course, will realize the full potential of involving all stakeholders in determining how a school's resources are used, and they'll have CTA members to thank.

CTA members continued to stand up to extremism,

and to use their collective power and support from CTA to push back against anti-LGBTQ+ policies such as Pride Flag bans and outing trans student policies, as well as book bans and attempts to remove basic truths about the role of race from history texts and other curriculum.

Those policies were enacted in a handful of districts with extremist school board members, but we've seen ongoing and well-funded, organized attempts to spread those ideas elsewhere and to elect school board members with similar views in other districts throughout the state. That's one reason why elections in 2024 will be so important and why many CTA members will need to be involved in their own local school board elections or supporting colleagues fighting election battles in neighboring districts. Some of our chapters are leading recall efforts against the most extreme school board members in their districts. There were positive indicators already this year that the public is on our side; in other states extremist candidates from groups like Moms4Liberty who ran for local and state offices lost overwhelmingly.

CTA has already taken March primary election positions on ballot initiatives preserving majority vote democracy on state and local matters (there are those who want to make it extremely difficult for school districts and local entities to fund vital services through elections), and we've made key endorsements in state representative races. All our recommendations are available in the CTA voter guide at cta.org/election and on page 31.

As we work together to advance our powerful agenda for the future of public education, as we organize for better working and learning conditions for educators and students, and as we fight off attacks that undermine public schools, I'm deeply grateful for our union. We accomplish so much together, exponentially more than any of us could ever do on our own. Let's maximize that strength and solidarity, and make 2024 a great year for education workers, for students and for public education.

David B. Goldberg

CTA PRESIDENT



▼ By Marely Hernandez, grades 7-8, Region 3; teacher:
Cecilia Silveyra, Montebello Teachers Association

What Unity Can Do

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY to ensure that California draws in qualified new educators who reflect the demographics of the students they serve?

It is not, according to recent research and data, through the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) required to earn a teaching credential. In fact, to read comments by early-career educators who participated in a CTA survey (see our story “**Redundant, Stressful, Time-Consuming**,” page 26), the TPA is so onerous that it discourages teacher candidates — particularly BIPOC candidates — from entering the profession.

Just one of scores of similar survey comments: “[The TPA] caused so much additional stress and anxiety that I had to reconsider whether I truly wanted to pursue this profession. It drove away my passion for education. I eventually sought mental health care.”

A high-level CTA workgroup along with a State Council committee evaluated TPA impacts; both concluded that while standards must remain high and accountability is critical, TPAs undermine teacher preparation and negatively impact teacher supply and diversity. Your union is now working on an outcome that could embed the TPA in teacher candidates’ clinical practice as part of the broader assessment.

Keeping quality educators as well as attracting and supporting good candidates is equally important, and multiple stories in this issue show how unified union organizing and bargaining can win the gains in wages, benefits and working conditions that make educators feel valued and want to continue to teach and nurture students; see “**Fresno Teachers Win Historic Contract**” (page 16), “**2006 Strike Remembered**” (page 20), “**Support From All Corners**” (page 21).

While the 4,000-member-strong Fresno Teachers Association was prepared to strike on Nov. 1, it reached a settlement with the school district the day before. No doubt the district recognized the power of members’ unbreakable unity with each other and with families and community — manifested in a massive FTA turnout for a strike vote rally and a teacher Day of Action at every single school site.

Solidarity goes hand-in-hand with inclusivity. In our story on building an inclusive classroom (“**Showing Everyone They Belong**,” page 23), CTA member leaders offer tips, one of which is “Set the foundation: The



classroom is ‘ours.’” A classroom, a school, students and educators are all stronger when we embrace everyone and include them.

Students know this — just look at a few of the winning student artworks from CTA’s César E. Chávez and Dolores Huerta Education Awards Program, on this page and in “**Scholarships, Grants, Awards, Oh My!**” page 48. Under the guidance of their teachers, students create art and written essays that demonstrate an understanding of the vision and guiding principles of Chávez and Huerta, including solidarity. As Huerta said, “We have to come together as workers, as a community, and fight for the rights that we all deserve.”

Yes, together we become one. Happy New Year!

Katharine Fong

EDITOR IN CHIEF

editor@cta.org

Your Vote Is Your Voice

The March Primary will soon be upon us. Now is the time to get informed and engaged and be ready to vote with California educators. Know that when you follow CTA recommendations on candidates and important initiatives, you are voting to support our students, schools and colleges. See page 31 for details.





CO-SPONSORS INCLUDE:

Graduate School of Education
Stanford University

Greater Good Science Center
University of California, Berkeley

Neuroscape
University of California, San Francisco

School Development Program
Yale University

**Laboratory for Learning Engineering
and Neural Systems (BrainLENS)**
University of Connecticut and UCSF

The Neuro-Education Initiative
Johns Hopkins Graduate School of Education

**National Association of Elementary
School Principals (NAESP)**

**National Association of Secondary
School Principals (NASSP)**

*"The best thing parents
and teachers can do is to
teach their children to love
challenges, be intrigued by
mistakes, enjoy effort, and
keep on learning."*

—Carol S. Dweck, PhD
Stanford University

TEACHING ENGAGED BRAINS: IMPROVING STUDENT ATTENTION, MOTIVATION, AND MINDSETS IN A DISENGAGED, DISTRACTED AGE

FEBRUARY 22-24, 2024

Pre-Conference Workshops: February 22

AT THE HISTORIC FAIRMONT HOTEL, ATOP NOB HILL,
IN SAN FRANCISCO, CA, OR VIRTUALLY VIA ZOOM

Mindsets: Engaging the Brains of Students – and Teachers

Carol S. Dweck, PhD, Stanford University and Stanford Graduate School of Education

The Distracted Mind: Improve Student Attention Through Technology

Adam Gazzaley, MD, PhD, University of California, San Francisco

**The Joy of Movement: The Power of Exercise for Engagement,
Self-Development, Connections, and Courage**

Kelly M. McGonigal, PhD, Stanford University and Stanford School of Medicine

Attention Span: Restoring Focus and Balance in a Distracting, Digital Age

Gloria J. Mark, PhD, University of California, Irvine

**The Secret to Motivation: The First Step to Changing a Child's Perspective
Is to Understand It**

Tommie Mabry, PhD, Tougaloo College

The Science of Motivation and Getting It Done

Ayelet Fishbach, PhD, University of Chicago

What Are We Doing to Our Adolescents?: Driving Our Youth Away From School

Jacquelynne S. Eccles, PhD, University of California, Irvine

**The ABCs of Being Engaged: Creating Schools That Promote Student
Wellness, Belonging, and Full Engagement**

Denise C. Pope, PhD, Stanford University

**The Impact of Attention Problems on Children's Academic Achievement
and Efforts to Improve Children's Attention Skills**

David L. Rabiner, PhD, Trinity College of Arts and Sciences and Duke University

Peak Mind: Finding Your Focus and Owning Your Attention

Amishi P. Jha, PhD, University of Miami

Bright Kids Who Couldn't Care Less: Rekindling Your Student's Motivation

Ellen B. Braaten, PhD, Harvard Medical School

**The Minds of Media Multitaskers: Attention, Learning, Memory, and
the Brain in Multitaskers**

Anthony D. Wagner, PhD, Stanford University

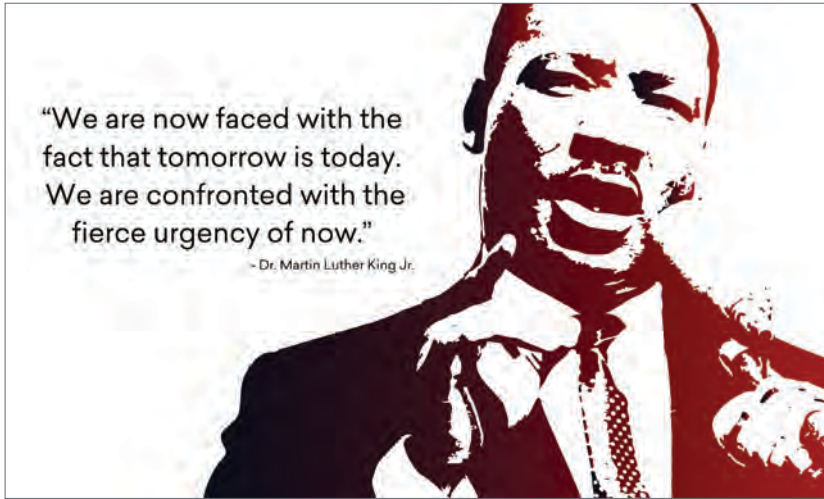
Register Now to Save!

For more information and a complete list of speakers, visit
LearningAndTheBrain.com or call 857-444-1500 ext. 1 or 2.



DECEMBER 2023 / JANUARY 2024

CALENDAR



MLK Jr. Day of Service

JAN. 15

Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Mon., Jan. 15, is a federal holiday designated as a National Day of Service, when Americans step up to make communities more equitable and take action to create the Beloved Community of Dr. King's dream. Encourage students to honor Dr. King's life of service by volunteering to clean and green local parks, pack and deliver food to home-bound neighbors, and more. Find events and volunteer activities at americorps.gov/newsroom/events/mlk-day. Educators can also design their own day (or semester); find ideas, toolkits and classroom facilitator guides at ysa.org/resources.



Happy New Year!

Wishing our CTA family peace, love and joy! Here's hoping 2024 is a brilliant year for all.

Butte County of Education



The Great Kindness Challenge **JAN. 22-26**

Empower students to create a culture of kindness through the weeklong GKC (school edition), a proactive and positive SEL-focused bullying prevention program for grades K-12. GKC's impact to date: More than 19,000 students at 40,000 schools around the world have participated, resulting in over 950 million acts of kindness! Schools can sign up at thegreatkindnesschallenge.com to find age-appropriate kindness checklists and additional resources.

Good Teaching Conference — North & South

MASTER NEW SKILLS and update your expertise at CTA's Good Teaching Conference — North or South. GTC supports excellent teaching and learning practices for classroom teachers via peer-to-peer instruction — and who better to learn from than fellow educators? In addition to workshops focused on curriculum content areas for K-12 teachers, GTC provides opportunities for professional development and to network and share ideas with colleagues and experts.

GTC-North, **FEB. 2-4** *Hyatt Regency SFO*;
GTC-South, **MAR. 22-24** *Hyatt Regency Orange County*.

Find more information, registration and a letter you can use to show your principal or district the value of attending GTC at cta.org/conferences.
GTC-North booking deadline: Jan. 18. **#CTAGTC**



CTA State Gold Awards

JAN. 5, 2024

NOMINATION DEADLINE

Given to individuals (including private citizens and public officials) or organizations whose leadership, acts and support have had a positive impact on California public education. Any CTA member may nominate.

► cta.org/awards

CTA Issues Conference

JAN. 12-14, 2024 CONFERENCE

Planet Hollywood Las Vegas, Nevada. Educators from rural, urban and ESP locals throughout the state come together to learn, share, strategize and unite together to determine the future of public education.

► cta.org/conferences

NEA RA State Delegate Candidacy

JAN. 31, 2024 FILING DEADLINE

Candidates for NEA Representative Assembly state delegate must submit a declaration of candidacy by Jan. 31, 2024, at 4 p.m. The 2024 RA will be held July 3-7 in Philadelphia, PA.

► cta.org/racandidacy

CCA Winter Conference

FEB. 2-4, 2024 CONFERENCE

Los Angeles. The Community College Association's Winter Conference highlights advocacy in addition to lobbying and contract enforcement issues. It will also offer a bargaining, grievance or advocacy academy, and address legislation relevant to community colleges.

► cca4us.org/conferences

CTA Scholarships **FEB. 9, 2024**

APPLICATION DEADLINE

The CTA Scholarship Program offers scholarships up to \$3,000 to CTA members; up to \$5,000 to dependent children of active members; and up to \$5,000 to Student CTA members.

► cta.org/scholarships

Martin Luther King Jr.

Scholarships **FEB. 23, 2024**

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarships up to \$6,000 are available to CTA members, their dependents, and Student CTA members who are persons of color and are pursuing a teaching-related career.

► cta.org/scholarships

CTA/NEA-Retired Issues Conference

FEB. 29-MAR. 1, 2024 CONFERENCE

Westin Bonaventure, Los Angeles. Learn how CTA/NEA-Retired is protecting your future and watching legislation that affects your benefits. Stay connected, be protected, and enjoy great benefits. ► cta.org/conferences

Chavez/Huerta Awards

MARCH 1, 2024 ENTRY DEADLINE

Cesar E. Chavez and Dolores Huerta Education Awards honor students who show they understand Chavez and Huerta's guiding principles with a visual art project or written essay. Awards up to \$550 go to both the sponsoring CTA member and the student.

► cta.org/scholarships

Spring CUE 2024

MARCH 21-23, 2024 CONFERENCE

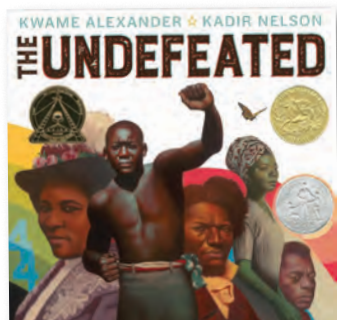
Palm Springs Convention Center. Cutting-edge ed tech and teaching techniques are on the agenda.

► cue.org

Read more about CTA scholarships, grants and awards on page 48.



Art for the Mind



A NEW YEAR, a new list of CTA California Reads books. Because they're vetted by teachers, you can't go wrong with any of the 2023-24 selections for your students and classrooms. For the full list, descriptions and links to buy — at a 20% member discount — visit cta.org/careads.

Originally performed for ESPN's *The Undefeated*, this poem by Kwame Alexander (with illustrations by Kadir Nelson; intermediate school) is a love letter to Black life in America. It highlights the trauma of slavery, the faith and fire of the civil rights movement, and the grit, passion and perseverance of some of the world's greatest heroes. The text contains references to words from Martin Luther King, Jr., Langston Hughes, Gwendolyn Brooks and others, offering insights into the accomplishments of the past while bringing attention to the endurance and spirit of those surviving and thriving in the present. On Amazon.

Every day, children in migration are detained at the U.S.-Mexico border. They are scared and often alone. *Hear My Voice/Escucha Mi Voz* (compiled by Warren Binford; middle school) shares the stories of 61 of these children — from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Ecuador and Mexico, ranging from age five to 17 — in their own words from actual sworn testimonies. The book is in English on one side, Spanish on the other, and is illustrated by 17 Latinx artists. *Hear My Voice* includes information, questions and action points, and proceeds benefit Project Amplify, an organization that supports children in migration. On Amazon.

Young children will love hearing the explanation of the phases of the moon in *A Big Mooncake for Little Star* (by Grace Lin; pre-K, TK and K). Little Star loves the delicious mooncake that she bakes with her mama, but what happens when she can't resist a nibble before it's the right time? On Amazon.

Banned books for you & your students

A Big Mooncake for Little Star is one of several CTA California Reads selections over the years that have been banned in other states. In this case, *Little Star* was banned for containing "political statements," but from what we can tell, it was only banned after it appeared on a list of children's books for teachers interested in sharing diverse characters with their students. Support this book and other banned books that have been California Reads selections:

- Everywhere Babies, by Susan Meyers
- All Boys Aren't Blue, by George M. Johnson
- This Book is Gay, by Juno Dawson
- The Best at It, Maulik Pancholy
- The Hate You Give, by Angie Thomas
- George, by Alex Gino
- Beyond Magenta, by Susan Kuklin
- Gender Queer, Maia Kobabe
- Stamped, by Jason Reynolds



Black Lives Matter at School Week of Action

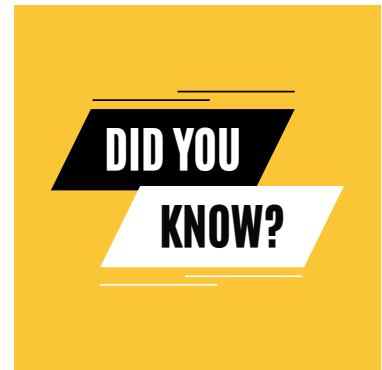
BLM at School Week of Action takes place Feb. 5–9, 2024. Black Lives Matter at School is a national committee of educators organizing for racial justice in education. Every year, educators, students, parents, unions and community organizations join the Week of Action to bring awareness to urgent issues and guiding principles. This year’s theme focuses on one of those principles: “Celebrating and Centering Collective Value.”

The principle states “We are guided by the fact that all Black lives, regardless of sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, economic status, ability, disability, education, location, age, immigration status, religious beliefs or disbeliefs, matter. None of us are free until we are all free.”

Find more information about the week’s events as well as curriculum resources, a Week of Action starter kit and a toolkit at blacklivesmatteratschool.com and nea.org/blmatschool.

You’ve Got Access!

Members enjoy exclusive deals and discounts on travel, theme parks, dining, shopping and much more with CTA Access to Savings. Whether it’s a special vacation or everyday needs, Access to Savings saves you money and helps you and your family experience more for less. Check out the myriad offerings from brand names you know and love, or try something new. Visit CTAMemberBenefits.org.



CTA Conferences — Did You Know?

In addition to great learnings and networking, some CTA conferences offer members:

- **Release time** for a CTA/NEA Member Benefits pre-conference, which means your employer can be reimbursed for your substitute on that day to assist with your availability to attend; these workshops provide everything you need to know about your member benefits as well as personal finance advice and resources;
- **Incentive grants** to defray conference costs; grants are available to new members, BIPOC members, members from small chapters, and other categories based on the particular conference. Grants are currently available for Good Teaching Conference-South and the Equity & Human Rights Conference; deadline is Jan. 9, 2024, and applications are at cta.org/grants;
- **Professional growth hours**, available at no cost; confirmation of hours is emailed post-conference.
- **University credit**: By attending in-person or virtual conferences, members can accumulate the professional growth hours needed to qualify for university credit units with CSU Chico. CTA covers the cost for up to six university credit units (normally \$75/credit).

Check specific conference information and offerings at cta.org/conferences.

▼ From a segment on Ethnic Studies at El Rancho High School in Los Angeles.



Inside California Education

A new season of *Inside California Education* is underway, presenting a variety of topics on public education from schools and communities across the state. One recent show looks at El Rancho High School in Los Angeles, which boasts an entire cross-curricular department focused on Ethnic Studies — well ahead

of the new state law requiring all high school students to take at least one Ethnic Studies course before graduation, starting in the 2025–26 school year. (Among the offerings: a math course titled “I am an ethnic statistic.”)

Another segment explores the successes and challenges of affordable housing for educators on school district properties; another checks in on students building and racing hydrogen fuel cell cars. The series covers early education, K–12 and community colleges, and features small rural districts, urban schools and everything in between. View episodes at insidecaled.org or on your local PBS station. *Inside California Education* is a production of PBS KVIE in Sacramento and NationalEdOnline.

Survey: Support for Unions Amid Economic Uncertainty

The 25th year of the statewide Public Policy Institute of California survey was released in November: “Californians and Their Economic Well-Being” surveyed 2,250 California adult residents in October on a variety of topics. Majorities of Californians think the state is headed in the wrong direction economically and favor increased government funding for childcare programs and job training programs, an expansion of the earned income tax credit as well as policies to reduce higher education costs and offer a public health option.

A bright spot (in percentages):

Most Californians approve of labor unions

	Approve	Disapprove	Don't Know
All adults	70	26	4

And a majority say they would like to see labor unions in the U.S. have more influence than they have today or should have the same amount of influence as they do today:

A plurality of Californians think labor unions should have the same amount of influence as they have today

	More influence than they have today	The same as today	Less influence than they have today	Don't Know
All adults	34	41	22	3

To see the full report, go to ppic.org/survey.

QUOTES & NUMBERS

Compiled by Julian Peeples



72%

Percentage of students

who said it would be helpful to learn how to use generative AI responsibly, according to a recent study by the Center for Democracy and Technology. Less than half said they received AI guidance at school.

23.3

Days of instruction lost to out-of-school suspension per 100 students in Kern High School District, according to a report by the UCLA Civil Rights Project. Kern High had the highest rate of instructional time lost among African American students — 80 days per 100 students.

0.7

Days of instruction lost to out-of-school suspension per 100 students in Los Angeles Unified School District, which reported 40 times lower lost instruction rates for African American students than Kern HSD.

50

Emil Kalibradov / Unsplash

States where education support professionals earn on average less than a living wage, according to NEA.



"We were relentless about what needed to change and how it needed to change. Our struggle is not a series of challenges and accomplishments — it's an ongoing building of the profession and development of educators standing up for their rights. We don't stop."

—MANUEL BONILLA, Fresno Teachers Association (FTA) president, on FTA's historic victory in October. (See page XX.)



"Our students aren't sardines. The class sizes are unsafe, unlawful and makes it doubly difficult for teachers to do their jobs."

—SARA LIEBERT, Auburn Union Teachers Association president, as teachers demanded safe drinking water, smaller class sizes and enough staff support to better teach and support students during events in October and November.

"Education is the best profession in the world. We need caring adults who are qualified, who will love our students and help them be the best that they can be."

—PRINCESS MOSS, NEA Vice President, on the nationwide educator shortage in a Prism story in November.



"My name is Miguel, but a lot of my teachers called me Michael. In seventh grade, I finally had the courage to tell my principal that I'd like to be called by the name that my Latino parents gave me — Miguel, not Michael. To any student that is reading this, your identity matters."

—DR. MIGUEL CARDONA, U.S. Secretary of Education, on X (formerly Twitter) in late October.



"I come to these English classes because here, I don't feel alone. I chat with my classmates, and they greet me back."

—HERMELINDA FIGUEROA, 80-year-old student, in a November CalMatters story about how students 50 and older are leading an enrollment rebound in California community colleges.

▼ Scott, far left, with students who are interning at 18 Hayward Unified elementary schools as part of Raising Leaders' Youth Enrichment Program (at right: program coordinator Rina Serrano).

▼ Davida Scott



"I Never Gave Up"

Davida Scott receives 2024 NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence

DAVIDA SCOTT REMEMBERS 2013 as if it were yesterday. It was the year her first student was murdered, and the year her first student was charged with murder.

A youth employment specialist at the time, she recalls crying in her office, wondering what she could have done to save her students from gun and gang violence, and drugs. She continued to lose more in the following years as she became an educator at Hayward Adult School. She came to realize that while she could not save her students, she could help build a pathway for them to achieve their goals — learning life and professional skills, getting a job, finding a career, making the most of opportunities and living productive lives.

Scott works with children and youth who fall through the cracks and are mostly forgotten — kids on probation or in juvenile custody, kids in foster care, teen moms, homeless

and at-risk kids, students expelled from traditional schools. She has spent her career as a teacher on special assignment at her school, and true to her commitment to build a pathway for her students, Scott created Raising Leaders — Workshops & Internships in 2018.

It's been a challenging journey, but the program's success has led to Scott winning a 2024 NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence. She credits Hayward Education Association with supporting her efforts. "My union paved the way for me to build Raising Leaders even when I faced pushback from previous leadership at Hayward Adult School," she says, adding that while administrators are now very supportive, it was difficult to convince them earlier that the program could be sustainable. "I would not be where I am now without [the union]."

Scott, center, with students interning with Alameda County firefighters, along with Raising Leaders staff, the Hayward Adult School director and the District 2 county supervisor.



The Educator first wrote about Scott in late 2020, recognizing Raising Leaders' accomplishments in serving 240 students in Alameda County and collaborating with community to offer 120 paid internships and raising \$800,000 from local government and private donors to expand services.

Fast forward three years, and Scott and Raising Leaders have:

- raised a total of \$5.6 million — and counting;
- four certificated teachers and a full-time intern under Scott, all former students, who help manage her students (including a virtual class on Wednesday nights with 180 students);
- established a \$1 million annual youth payroll so students, after taking her eight-week workshop that counts as credit recovery, can interview for and work at internships in city and county departments as well as CSU East Bay paying up to \$24 per hour;
- started serving 8th graders in both continuation and traditional high schools, meaning the program now serves youth as young as 14 and up to 25;
- started serving youth in juvenile custody, who after they take the workshop can earn \$20 per hour in paid internships, gaining work experience — the first such model in the nation.

“My union paved the way for me to build Raising Leaders. I would not be where I am now without [the union].”

In addition, Raising Leaders has adopted 66 blocks in Hayward that students regularly keep clean as community service, opened a store on campus where Pre-K–12 students can get free, brand-new clothes and supplies; and expanded a program where students help with homework tutoring and enrichment activities in several school districts in Alameda County.

Scott has forged partnerships with multiple city and county agencies and leaders, CSU East Bay, and community businesses and organizations; she taps all of them for internships, workshop guest speakers, funding and more. She is thankful for their support, and for providing top-tier opportunities. “Two of my former students are getting *elite* experience going out with firefighters on 911 calls!” she says proudly, referring to a Raising Leaders paid internship.

While touting what Raising Leaders has achieved, Scott is quick to note that it did not come easy. “I worked so hard,” she says, becoming emotional. “I forget how much I’ve been through and how hard it was. I never gave up, I just kept on going.”

Scott herself was a truant at Hayward High School and

got kicked out of her house at age 15. She moved in with her sister, who was a case manager at a nonprofit that helped youth find summer jobs, and became an intern in that program. She liked helping others so much that she went back to high school and later earned her credential to teach adult education through the University of San Diego.

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

In Scott’s application to the NEA Foundation selection panel, she makes clear the difficulties she’s faced: “By serving the populations I serve, I have been held at gun point twice [on campus] due to gang violence, I have been stalked, harassed and had my safety ripped away from me. Through all these trials and tribulations, I remained true to my calling which is being a teacher.”

Hayward Education Association President Mercedes Faraj alluded to these challenges in describing Scott’s impact in her nomination letter to the NEA panel. “She continued her calling to serve students that are the most at-risk within our community.

“Ms. Scott has been able to change the trajectory of hundreds of young lives and has dedicated her career to raising up an inclusive workforce for our community and our nation.” ■

Recipients of the 2024 NEA Foundation Award for Teaching Excellence will be honored at the NEA Foundation Salute to Excellence in Education on May 3, 2024, in Washington, DC.

To hear more about Davida Scott and Raising Leaders, listen to the November 2023 ProBaytion in Alameda County podcast at bit.ly/davidascott.

▼ A sea of blue: More than 3,400 FTA members packed an amphitheater in the Fresno Fairgrounds in 90-degree heat for a rally opening their strike vote.



Fresno Teachers Win Historic Contract

Inspiring unity and righteous confidence power victory

By Julian Peoples

WHEN BARGAINING STARTED last year, 4,000 Fresno teachers committed to each other to do whatever it took for the schools [#EveryFresnoStudent](#) deserves. In October, their unbreakable unity powered a historic contract victory that averted a strike and sets the foundation for transforming Fresno public schools.

On Halloween, it was all treats and no tricks for Fresno Teachers Association (FTA) with the announcement that a tentative agreement had been reached less than 24 hours before Fresno teachers were set to walk picket lines for the first time in 45 years.

“At the core of this negotiation were four major priorities: reducing class sizes for students, reducing special education caseloads, keeping our teachers competitively paid, and ensuring continued and stable health coverage,” FTA President Manuel Bonilla said at an Oct. 31 press conference at Fresno High School. “Today, we’ve reached a historic agreement that not only accomplishes those goals, it exceeds them.”

Among FTA’s victories: a commitment that a portion of future bond money will go to increasing classroom space and elementary music space, additional funding for student supports and a plan to have a school nurse at every school in three years.

▼ FTA members ratified the agreement on Nov. 1, with 92% voting to approve — the highest turnout for a ratification vote in the chapter's history. FTA President Manuel Bonilla, pictured, celebrates the victory at Chukchansi Park.



“Our struggle is not a series of challenges and accomplishments — it’s an ongoing building of the profession and development of educators standing up for their rights. We don’t stop.”

—FTA President **Manuel Bonilla**

FTA also won pay increases that takes veteran and new teachers in Fresno from the bottom in wages to near the top Central Valley-wide. And in a win that was seen by many as unattainable, FTA won lifetime medical benefits for teachers with 20 or more years of service to Fresno Unified. These gains will help to stem churn in Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) that saw one in five teachers leave after last school year, meaning Fresno kids will have more seasoned educators who know them and understand the community.

“Our teachers can return to the classroom tomorrow, rather than standing on a picket line, knowing that we are charting a different path forward together,” Bonilla said. “Because they’ve made it clear that students thrive when educators thrive — and educators thrive when leaders value their hard work, tireless dedication and are committed to providing adequate support.”

FTA members ratified the agreement the following day, with 92% voting to approve in the highest turnout for a ratification vote in FTA’s history. The Fresno Unified School Board approved the contract the same day.

While Fresno Unified administrators spent the summer devising ways to break a potential strike, including offering \$500 a day

Continued on Page 18

▼ Fresno teachers held informational pickets at every FUSD school during a Day of Action leading up to their strike date.



What FTA Won

THE 4,000 MEMBERS of Fresno Teachers Association won a landmark contract with advancements in every area on the wings of powerful unity by Fresno teachers, school nurses and trades.

Smaller class sizes: Three-pronged approach to lowering class sizes for the near-, mid- and long-term. This includes a commitment to devote a portion of future bond monies to building additional classroom space, elementary music space and confidential space.

Pay increase: 16% on-schedule over three years plus off-schedule payments and longevity that will bring new and veteran teacher pay to near the top Central Valley-wide. Teachers with more than 25 years of service to FUSD will see a more than 27% increase.

Reinstatement of lifetime medical: For all employees after 20 years of service to FUSD — a huge win that sets the standard for educators statewide.

Special Ed caseload reductions: New language stipulating special education caseload guidelines.

Health fund protection: Removed language that put future cost increases on teacher backs.

A nurse at every school: Won a plan to have a school nurse at every Fresno school in three years.

Supporting the whole child: \$30 million for student social-emotional supports, determined by Fresno educators.

Adult Ed/Trades Parity: Longevity for Adult Ed teachers and trades workers.

More teaching, less meetings: Up to one meeting per week and it must be during the normal workday.



▼ FTA drew major support from CTA and other unions, as well as parents and community.



“This is the professionalization of Fresno teachers. (FTA), you did that! We did that!”

—FTA secretary **Trish Renfro**

Continued from Page 17

to substitutes to cross a picket line, FTA organized members, building strength through unity in their mission for Fresno students. In mid-October, more than 3,400 blue-shirted, sign-toting FTA members packed a massive amphitheater in the Fresno Fairgrounds after school in 90-degree heat for a rally opening their strike vote. Bonilla says it was the largest assembly in FTA history. This powerful display of unity sent a message to FUSD administrators and the community that Fresno teachers would not back down in the fight for #EveryFresnoStudent.

“I think admin was operating with a fair amount of hubris that we weren’t ready to strike, and that just shows the disconnect,” says Bonilla, a social science teacher at McLane High School. “The strike vote rally was the tipping point because it made it less scary and more safe for folks to see they were standing together with other teachers across the district.”

When the dust settled, 93.5% of members had voted to authorize a strike and FTA’s executive board set a strike date of Nov. 1. On the Friday before the strike was to commence, Fresno

teachers held a “Day of Action” with informational pickets outside every FUSD school — an awesome display of what was to come if an agreement could not be reached in time.

Bonilla says the strike vote rally and day of action was a 1-2 punch that turned the tide for FTA, making FUSD admin return to the bargaining table and offer much more for students and teachers than in their proposal made just prior to the strike vote event.

“The movement since the (strike vote) rally is amazing,” says Trish Renfro, high school teacher and FTA secretary. “This is the professionalization of Fresno teachers. (FTA), you did that! We did that!”

Labor family from CTA and other unions supported FTA’s fight — CTA local associations adopted resolutions supporting FTA while the Fresno Area Substitute Teachers Association, SEIU 521 and Teamsters Joint Council 7 all showed public support for the strike, underscoring that the Labor Movement is alive and thriving in the Central Valley.



▼ FTA President Bonilla announced a tentative agreement had been reached at an Oct. 31 press conference at Fresno High School.



➔ How They Did It

FRESNO TEACHERS WON a historic contract through unbreakable solidarity, commitment to a shared vision and faith in FTA leadership. Here are some tips learned by FTA President Manuel Bonilla.

Start with a vision: Bonilla shared a photoshopped graphic during a 2021 retreat with the FTA executive board that showed thousands of blue-shirted educators rallying for better Fresno schools — which became reality this year (see graphic). “We got the board to see that it was possible and asked what needed to happen to make it a reality.”

Know your audience: “We never thought we were in the wrong. If something is right, that’s what we need to do. That resonated with our members, and then we were relentless about it.”

Lean into transparency and difficult conversations: “We were always informing people. We had lots of virtual meetings with 2,000-plus members. Invite people into the process.”

Be relentless with your message: “Overcommunicate and call things what they are, but be sure to take the high road. Keep things classroom-centered and student-focused.”

The struggle continues: “The top of one mountain is the base of another — we are literally having discussions about what we are going to do next.”

“Our teachers made it clear that students thrive when educators thrive — and educators thrive when leaders value their hard work, tireless dedication and are committed to providing adequate support.”

—FTA President **Manuel Bonilla**

“It’s absolutely amazing to see the solidarity with folks and the reason for it — not just with our members but with union members across the valley,” Bonilla says. “We gave them a reason and they just stepped up.”

Bonilla says this year’s victory was accomplished through a shared righteous confidence by all of FTA’s 4,000 members.

“We were relentless about what needed to change and how it needed to change,” Bonilla says. “Our struggle is not a series of challenges and accomplishments — it’s an ongoing building of the profession and development of educators standing up for their rights. We don’t stop.” ■

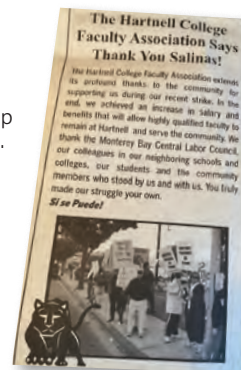
▼ In 2006, as now, it's all about respect.



▼ Kelly Locke



▶ A news clip from 2006.



2006 Strike Remembered

As Hartnell College faculty now fight for a fair contract, similar issues were at play 17 years ago **By Cynthia Menzel**

OCTOBER 20, 2006. The first day of the strike. Students drove circles around the campus, honking car horns in support of Hartnell College Faculty Association’s efforts to get a professional contract for instructors. The five-day strike came after more than two years of negotiations because of a lack of respect for faculty and intransigence on the part of the college board of trustees and management. Now, 17 years later, it looks like HCFA is heading down the same road, with members saying they hope for the best and are prepared for the worst. (See Bargaining Updates on page 38.)

“We worked so hard to divert that strike,” said Kelly Locke, who was on the organizing committee at the time. “All summer and fall, all kinds of actions and offers. And at every special board meeting we were hopeful, then our hopes were dashed. We had to do it.”

Then, as now, it seems to be about respect. “They strung things out, their behavior was disrespectful. We were at impasse for so long and then they ignored the fact-finding ruling,” said the 35-year veteran mathematics instructor. “Now, it is about respect again. They can afford our proposal and they are making the choice to NOT prioritize faculty salaries. And it looks like they are still ignoring our negotiations efforts.”

In 2006 “our students and community came out in strong

numbers to support us! This showed that our community values education and it gave us strength to know that we were not alone,” said Leti Contreras, who was a third-year tenure-track mathematics instructor at the time. “Our students were active participants in the strike, advocating for themselves and fighting for better learning conditions. Community members joined us on the picket lines and brought us water and food. Their kindness and support made me proud to be part of and to teach in this community.”

The strike provided an 11% raise, which bumped up the earnings for full-time teachers by between \$6,000 and \$7,000 a year, but still left salaries at the bottom statewide. Hartnell faculty salaries still rank last among the 14 area community colleges, and faculty have been working under an expired contract for over a year.

Hartnell College and HCFA are heading to mediation in December, and HCFA members will be out in force to support their bargaining team. They say Hartnell College can afford their proposal; trustees and management choose not to. Adding insult to injury, Hartnell College proclaimed college faculty “number one” at the start of the school year yet announced their priority is to increase management salaries. HCFA’s proposal includes cost-of-living increases and health benefits for part-time faculty. Hartnell College’s



Continued on Page 22

▼ CTA officers and board directors, including President David Goldberg (third from right), showed solidarity with striking RPCEA members.



"It was a true grassroots movement."
—RPCEA President Denise Tranfaglia

Support From All Corners

Lessons learned from the Rohnert Park-Cotati Educators Association strike line By Cynthia Menzel


In March 2022, more than 300 members of the Rohnert Park-Cotati Educators Association (RPCEA) made the decision to go on strike. RPCEA had been negotiating for months with Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District management and the school board for more investment in their students and educators — even going to state-appointed fact-finding. But CRPUSD ignored the fact-finder's report, leading to a six-day strike.

The strike ended when RPCEA reached agreement on a historic three-year contract. A chapter leader and the former bargaining chair look back at their fight and what they learned.

"While the strike was the absolute last resort, it only happened because the school board and district superintendent failed to work with us to negotiate a contract that would address recruitment and retention problems we were facing in our district, including recommendations from a neutral fact-finder," says RPCEA President Denise Tranfaglia, who was vice president during that time.

Preparing to strike can often be met with fear that the community will turn against educators. Some district administrators will chastise educators for daring to strike in an attempt to pit the community against educators who are willing to strike for improvements to their schools and districts. In reality, communities stand with educators. Time and time again, we see parents joining picket lines with their students and communities coming together to support educators.

That was the case in Rohnert Park and Cotati, a community in the North Bay with a school district that serves around 6,000 students. Tranfaglia notes that RPCEA had support from all corners. "Families and students were behind us, as were other locals and state labor organizations. Our sister union SEIU, representing classified employees in the district, joined the strike. We had tremendous support from local CTA organizers and leadership as well. It was a true grassroots movement."

Prior to the strike, district administrators offered a meager 2% on-schedule increase for the 2021–22 school year. RPCEA held firm — members were engaged before, 

Continued on Page 22



Hartnell *Continued from Page 20*

proposal changed .2% since last spring.

HCFA members are prepared to go do whatever it takes for their students who deserve qualified and respected instructors, and for their community.

"A strike is a last resort, and HCFA members did not take that decision lightly in 2006," Contreras noted. "However, we believe that it is necessary to protect the quality of education that our students deserve. As teachers in a Hispanic Serving Institution, we are committed to providing our students with the best possible education. This includes providing them with small class sizes so that they can receive the individual attention they need to succeed. It also includes paying our teachers fair wages and providing everyone with health care benefits so that we can retain and attract the most qualified applicants."

"I never thought we'd be here again," said Locke. "We were able to do it before and we'll do it again if we have to. Our community deserves better. The board isn't thinking about the community, otherwise they'd settle this contract."

Contreras agrees. "We are the lowest paid faculty in the region, and you, Board of Trustees, let this happen under your watch. What kind of message are you sending our students? Don't they deserve to have the most qualified teachers? Why aren't you willing to invest in our community's education by attracting and retaining the most qualified faculty? When a teacher leaves for a higher paying position, our students suffer the consequences. Their classes are filled with last-minute replacements or even cancelled, and this jeopardizes our students' chances to succeed and potentially delays their graduation date.

"Remember," she added, "when teachers work together, students win! ■"

"Our students and community came out in strong numbers to support us! This showed that our community values education and it gave us strength to know that we were not alone."

—**Leti Contreras**, *Hartnell College Faculty Association*



Rohnert Park-Cotati *Continued from Page 21*

during and after the strike. "At school board meetings it was a sea of red," says James Gregoretti, the bargaining chair during that time, referring to the Red for Ed campaign.

RPCEA was in constant communication with members about their concerns and issues, and Gregoretti says professional wages were always the top priority. "Parents and community members stopped us on the street and shared their support. They wanted the best for their kids, and having qualified, well-paid teachers is part of that."

Ultimately, RPCEA prevailed with a 16.38% salary raise and two \$1,000 stipends. Gregoretti's bargaining advice: "Stick to your guns. Numbers don't lie. Public education has had historic funding the last few years, and today's dollars are meant for today's teachers and today's students. Use the money for education now, not further down the road. Take care of teachers first."

Says Tranfaglia, "The economic gains in salary have helped to attract and retain educators to our beloved school district."

In the year of the strike, the district management fiscal projections were off by more than \$14 million. The failure to project accurately has become a trend. For 2022–23, the district's adopted budget projected \$80.4 million in total revenues. The revenues were actually \$99 million — a nearly \$20 million difference. While the district administrators may need a lesson in fiscal management, RPCEA educators are paying attention and are staying organized for their next bargain in 2025.

"Our local labor movement was ignited and we have a strong labor coalition in Sonoma County. We learned that when we show up for each other, great things happen," Tranfaglia recalls. "It took us six days to reach a tentative agreement, Although it was exhausting, difficult and stressful, it was such a beautiful moment. Our strike line community had deep conversations and it strengthened our association and community. Students learned an important lesson: You can stand up for your rights and do it peacefully."

As it turns out, teachers on strike are still teaching. ■

▼ Skye Tooley in their classroom.



“Being able to see yourself in a positive way is one of the most powerful things we can give our students.”

—Skye Tooley, UTLA

SHOWING EVERYONE THEY BELONG

Create learning environments where all students feel welcome

By Julian Peeples

AS A YOUNG STUDENT, Alma Galapon doesn’t remember ever seeing herself or her Filipino culture in her classrooms. A young Skye Tooley never once saw anything queer in their school — even growing up in Northern California. Both channel these experiences today as educators, working to build inclusive classrooms where every student feels welcome and knows they belong.

“If I had representation, I would’ve had language for all the things inside me,” says Tooley, a fifth-grade teacher and United Teachers Los Angeles member. “Being able to see yourself in a positive way is one of the most powerful things we can give our students.”

Galapon says creating equitable spaces begins with the class library. For her fourth-grade classroom, Galapon works to include all voices, as well as authors of color and characters of all backgrounds — it’s important to know your community, she says.

“We all know that books are windows and mirrors, and we want both in our library,” says Galapon, a member of Elk Grove Education Association. “There’s no comparison to being seen. Because when it really comes down to it, there have been many marginalized groups that have been excluded from our curriculum for so long.”

TIP:

Galapon says special months for recognizing different backgrounds and identities is great, but it shouldn’t be the only time students are celebrated in their classrooms. Think about who is honored in the room, she says, whether in posters on the wall or discussions in class.

“A classroom should look like it belongs to the children — it shouldn’t look like it belongs to the teacher at all,”



▼ Alma Galapon leads class.



“A classroom should look like it belongs to the children. They need to feel like they are a part of the classroom and it’s not just a place they go.”

—Alma Galapon, Elk Grove Education Association

Galapon says. “They need to feel like they are a part of the classroom and it’s not just a place they go.”

TIP:

Tooley says centering students in the classroom helps develop community, where the students determine how they want to learn together, how they talk to each other and how they care for their community. Tooley, an out trans educator, celebrates their students through identity work, teaching language to describe themselves and help learn who they are right now.

“We see how we are different, and we celebrate that,” Tooley says. “I think it’s important we see children as the intelligent human beings they are. They understand concepts but don’t always have the words.”

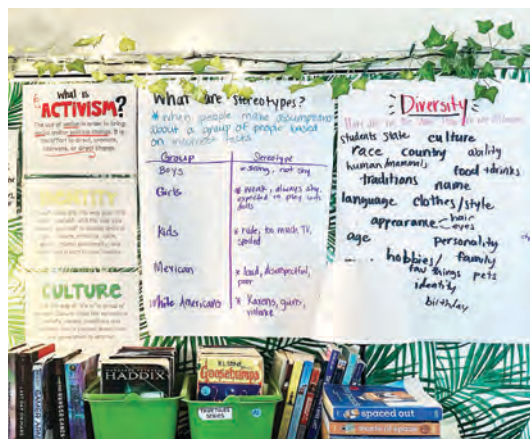
Working deliberately to ensure all students feel seen and valued isn’t only for educators with diverse student populations, Tooley says — learning to empathize with each other is a skill everyone needs, especially in today’s polarized and often acrimonious environment.

“This curriculum is for all of our populations because we don’t want to be tolerant of each other — we want to be inclusive of each other,” they say.

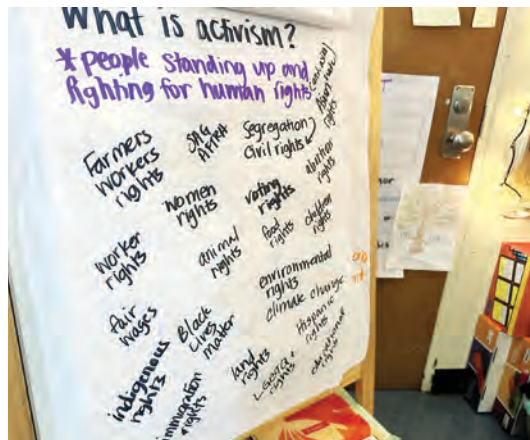
Tooley says any educator thinking about putting in the work to create a more inclusive classroom but waiting for the right time should take the plunge now.

“You’re never going to be ‘ready’ to do this work,” they say. “You need to just start and if you make a mistake, that’s ok.” ■

▼ Tooley’s walls inspire thought, learning, discussion.



▼ A flipchart in Tooley’s classroom.



BEHIND THE SCREEN

Gretel Rodriguez, a member of Sweetwater Education Association, has a unique perspective when it comes to building an inclusive classroom. While she taught high school English in person for 19 years, including AP English, for the past three years she has taught online to English Language Development and other students.

"I've had to be creative both in the classroom and online to make students feel included," she says. "Online, I change my backgrounds to match the topic of discussion. I use the poem In Lak'ech [by playwright Luis Valdez: "You are my other me. If I do harm to you, I do harm to myself. If I love and respect you, I love and respect myself"], which helps build community. We use Padlet, which is inclusive.

"I make sure as I get to know my students that there is representation of all those who self-identify in every small group, and that students in groups are diverse." She has noticed a growing number of queer students in her online classes because "they cannot transition physically with other students."



Gretel Rodriguez

TIP:

To ensure all students' voices are heard, Rodriguez will have them talk in pairs about a specific lesson or discussion topic, to lessen their anxiety. The pairs then designate one person to speak; whoever spoke last cannot talk again. Or she might use the four-corner debate method, where students choose a response or opinion to a statement or question, discuss with like-minded peers, and then speak to their choice.

"These are ways to include the quietest person in the classroom, and it encourages everyone to speak," says Rodriguez, adding that such activities create an atmosphere where students can speak in a non-evaluative manner.

Rodriguez knows inclusion matters — and not just in the classroom. One of her sons is queer and was bullied in high school; another is high-functioning autistic. The recipient of a CTA 2023 Human Rights Award, Rodriguez is a longtime social justice and women's advocate at the local, state and national levels. She has worked with her school's Black Students Union, Gay Student Alliance club and MEChA club (for Chicano students), among others. Her in-person classroom at lunchtime was open to all; special education teachers would send their students during that time because it was a safe place to eat and meet others.

TIPS

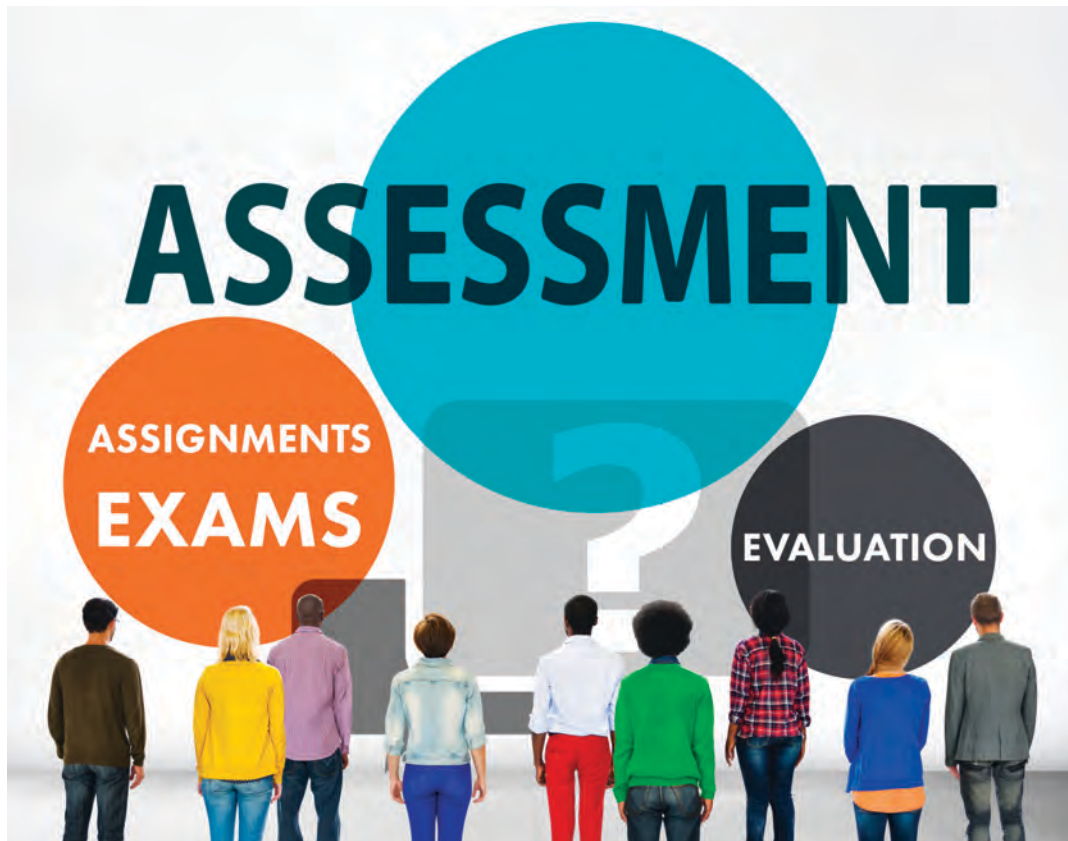
on Building Inclusive Classrooms

from **Alma Galapon** and **Skye Tooley**:

- Be mindful of who makes up your classroom. Teach students, not curriculum.
- Build libraries with diverse authors and characters.
- Center your students and be intentional about who they are.
- Create expectations for your classroom. How do they care for self, others and community?
- Set the foundation: The classroom is "ours."
- Celebrate students through identity work.
- Create space not just for your students but also their families.
- Classrooms tend to be cold spaces — be flexible in space, layout and seating. Create a comfortable place that helps students learn.
- Use words and language authentic to student experiences. Name racism and hate.
- Break down isolation.
- Focus on the joy of who your students are.
- Find a colleague at your site who is willing to do inclusion work with you. If you can't find one, find a fellow member of your local. Lean in to people who are there to help.
- Work with your local association to help determine your community needs.
- The CTA Human Rights Cadre can support diversity, equity and inclusion at your school.

Union Connections

Alma Galapon, Gretel Rodriguez and Skye Tooley are deeply involved in CTA union work, at the local chapter level and statewide. All are CTA Human Rights CADRE trainers, passionate about developing racial and social justice perspectives of fellow CTA members. Their focus on inclusion and equity includes chairing CTA caucuses, serving as State Council delegate, and creating and curating resources and curriculum for students.



Redundant, Stressful, Time-Consuming

While standards must remain high and accountability is critical, CTA finds Teaching Performance Assessments to have little value in teacher prep and suggests a better way

SINCE 2008, California’s Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) has required teacher candidates to pass a teaching performance assessment with K–12 public school students as a mandatory step toward earning a preliminary teaching credential.

The teaching performance assessment — CalTPA and EdTPA are the two models* — is designed to measure the candidate’s knowledge, skills and ability to instruct Pre-K–12 students in the Student Academic Content Standards. This includes subject-specific pedagogy, designing and implementing instruction

and student assessment, video-recording teaching, and reflecting on practice.

A recent CTA survey found that new educators overwhelmingly think the TPA does little to help prepare them to teach and in fact is redundant, stressful, time-consuming and often detrimental to physical and mental health. CTA also noted that because BIPOC teacher candidates have lower success rates on TPAs they may not pursue teaching as a career, which leads to educator ranks that do not reflect the diversity of California’s students.

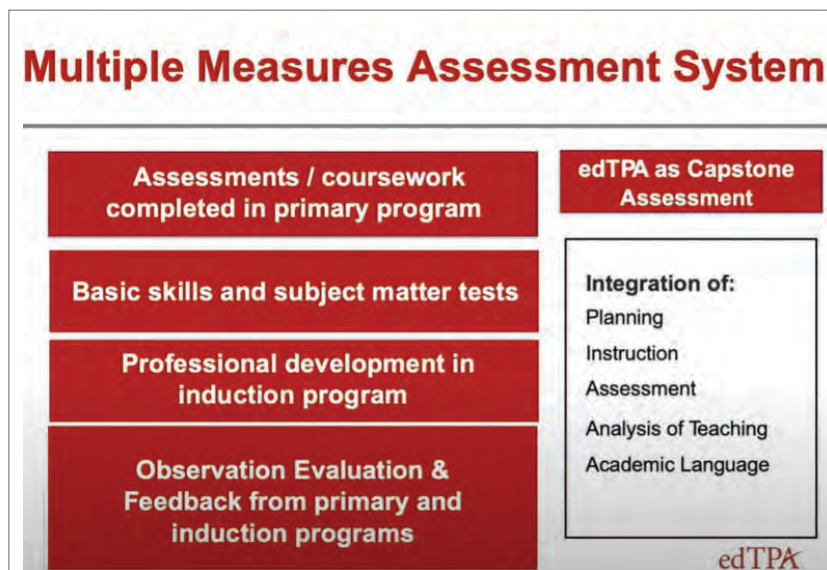
Comments from a 2023 CTA survey of 1,284 members with 10 or fewer years of teaching:

“[The TPA] caused so much additional stress and anxiety that I had to reconsider whether I truly wanted to pursue this profession. It drove away my passion for education. I eventually sought mental health care.”

“I don’t feel that I learned anything from the process, and instead was working to just show my ability to regurgitate academic language and label processes.”

“It made me hate myself and think I wasn’t a good teacher.”

▼ Exams, coursework and clinical practice, in the left-hand column, are already part of the requirements for a credential. The TPA, in the right-hand column, is unnecessary, according to CTA’s New Educator Pipeline Workgroup report.



For the past two years, CTA has been actively involved in evaluating TPA impacts, particularly relative to teacher supply, diversity, preparation and well-being. After extensive research and review, both CTA’s New Educator Pipeline Workgroup (NEPW) and Credentialing and Professional Development Committee of CTA State Council concluded that TPAs undermine teacher preparation and negatively impact teacher supply and diversity.

The findings are corroborated by the survey of 1,284 CTA members with 10 or fewer years of teaching. Some 60% of respondents “strongly agree” and 21% “agree” that the TPA should be eliminated outright.

The NEPW recommended that the TPA be eliminated as a requirement for teacher candidates and that performance-based assessment instead take place within teacher preparation coursework or practice.

“Judges candidates unfairly”

“CTA absolutely supports high standards for teaching and accountability,” said CTA Vice President Leslie Littman, who led the NEPW. “But the work group concluded that while there might have been good intentions with the TPA, it was always an additional burden and requirement for teacher candidates that was unnecessary,

“Just like how standardized testing doesn’t benefit our students, the TPA doesn’t benefit candidates and judges them unfairly.”

States that have already eliminated the TPA include Georgia, New Jersey, New York, Washington and Wisconsin. The Texas State Board of Education also moved to reject the EdTPA as a requirement following a three-year implementation pilot.

Most teacher candidates work on the TPA while completing coursework, other exams and other requirements for certification. The survey revealed that respondents found great value in the coursework and especially in their work with teacher mentors. They found little if any value to the TPA and saw it as an enormously difficult addition to their workload during an already challenging time.



Continued on Page 30

▼ Jazelle Johnston, pictured here in her classroom, says “the TPA is worded in such a way that it’s unapproachable.”



▼ Erin Githens and Miyuki Manzanedo pass out CTA survey results at the October meeting of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.



“The TPA Takes Away Time and Focus”

WHEN JAZELLE JOHNSTON ENROLLED in her credential course in 2022, she was told that she shouldn’t have a job because the coursework, clinical practice and TPA requirements would take all her time.

“During my first semester I didn’t work, but then during the second semester I had to get a job,” recalls Johnston, a member of Campbell High School Teachers Association. “I was substitute teaching, coaching a softball team and working at a café on weekends.”

Her workload became untenable. “I would do my TPA videos, then I would have to edit videos or write up the nine pages that go along with them at 11 p.m. at night. I’d be unconscious on my keyboard at 11:15, then wake up to be on campus student teaching by 7:30.”

Johnston feels that her stressful schedule “100%” affected her ability to pass the TPA, which she did this past June after two attempts. She also felt “the assessment is very biased. There is a prescribed way the CalTPA is set up — it’s super-scripted and you have to follow ‘rules’ that are ambiguous and unspoken.

“I’m an English teacher and context is everything — the TPA is worded in such a way that it’s unapproachable. And the

TPEs (Teaching Performance Expectations) are vaguely worded. You have to read it seven times over and try to figure out what you’re supposed to show as evidence.”

Johnston, 28, adds that the TPA is “really outdated. Instead of rote memorization we are now about student engagement and getting them on track.” She favors eliminating it, a sentiment shared by fifth-grade teacher Erin Githens, a member of La Habra Education Association, and second-grade teacher Miyuki Manzanedo, a member of Davis Teachers Association.

Githens started the CalTPA in 2018 after she had completed her credential program. “It’s difficult because once you complete your credential program there is no support for the TPA,” she says. “I had to seek support from other teachers.”

She found the TPA redundant. “It gives you tasks to assess the quality of your teaching, but that’s what a credential program does — [the latter] already gives you assignments and assessments and observes you in the classroom. The TPA takes away time and focus from this.”

Manzanedo says the TPA distracted from more

“The assessment is very biased. The CalTPA is super-scripted and you have to follow ‘rules’ that are ambiguous and unspoken.”

— **Jazelle Johnston**, Campbell High School Teachers Association

valuable teacher prep activities, taking time away “from preparing to student teach, from your time in your classroom, your time observing teachers, completing assignments and learning content standards. Instead of coursework you’re working on the TPA’s very high-stakes assignments.”

She recalls having to make “life choices.” “My TPA class ended at 7 p.m. so I would get home between 8:30 and 9. I had to decide whether to do homework or eat dinner or go to bed.”

Manzanedo was a “COVID candidate,” unable to complete the TPA due to the pandemic. Gov. Gavin Newsom granted these candidates a preliminary credential to help with the teacher shortage, and Manzanedo’s first year of teaching was online. In July 2023, Newsom signed off on SB 114, which exempted the candidates from having to pass the TPA if they had participated in an induction program or had been teaching for two years.

Both Manzanedo and Githens say they did not experience hardship while working on the TPA, but they saw others who did.

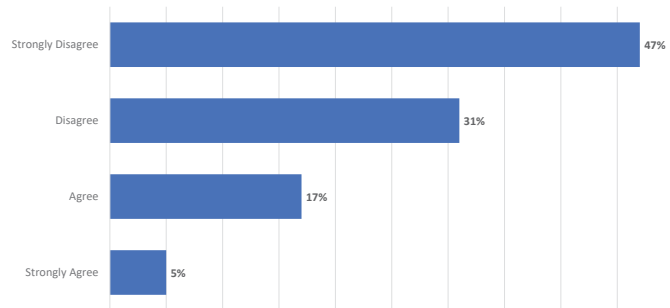
“I had way more privileges than my BIPOC peers,” Githens says. “I noticed my BIPOC peers were taking on more, many were caregivers, had outside jobs, and some even had housing and food insecurity. Historically school is not designed for them or those seeking second careers.”

Manzanedo feels that BIPOC educators did not get the additional help they needed. “[The TPA program] assumed they knew what candidates need to succeed. They did not reach out to BIPOC educators, they did not ask candidates ‘what do you need in this moment.’”

CTA surveyed 1,284 members with 10 or fewer years of teaching about requirements for their credential, including the TPA. Highlights from survey results:

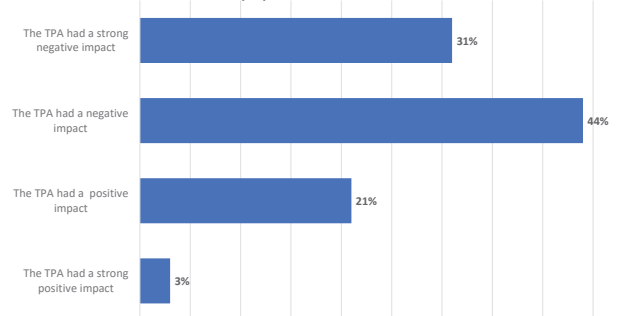
- ▼ 47% of CTA survey participants “strongly disagreed” and 31% “disagreed” with the statement “Completing a TPA helped prepare me to meet the needs of students in California schools.”

Q12: Completing a Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) helped prepare me to meet the needs of students in California schools.



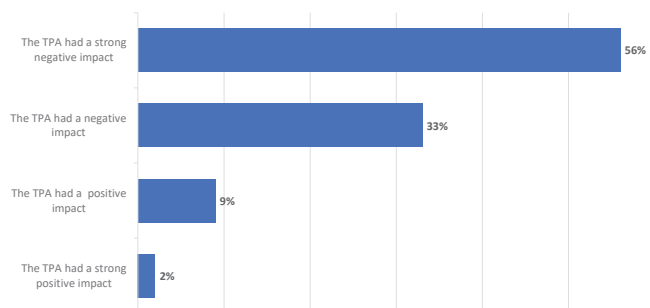
- ▼ A total of 75% of survey participants felt the TPA had a “strong negative impact” or “negative impact” on their teacher preparation coursework.

Q14: How did the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) impact your teacher preparation coursework?



- ▼ 89% of CTA survey participants felt the TPA had a “strong negative impact” or “negative impact” on their personal lives as they completed their teacher preparation program.

Q16: How did the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA) impact your personal life as you completed your teacher preparation program?



Continued from Page 27

Controversy about the TPA — and its impact on BIPOC teacher candidates — is not new. The California Alliance of Researchers for Equity in Education asked the CTC in 2021 to end high stakes standardized testing in teacher education, saying in a letter that problems with teacher credentialing exams include “validity, reliability, fairness, and bias.” In a 2019 research brief, the alliance had recommended that California eliminate the TPA “from all high-stakes decision making.”

Embedding assessment in clinical practice

Surveying and talking to union members, along with setting up structures to study the TPA issue, has positioned CTA leaders and educators to take action. At this year’s October 12–13 meeting of the CTC, CTA distributed its survey results along with recommendations for TPA revision. They include:

- The onus for passing the TPA must transfer from the candidate to the teacher preparation program, as specified by law;
- The assessment should be embedded in teacher candidates’ clinical practice as part of the broader assessment;
- Candidates should not have to take the TPA more than once;
- The accreditation process, including the TPA, should ensure that candidates are supported.

At the CTC meeting, Commissioner Christopher Davis spoke on standardized testing’s impact on BIPOC candidates. Standardized testing, he said, causes “disproportionate harm” to people of color. “We continue to struggle with the reality that our state, through these examinations, is systematically discriminating against the very diversity it alleges it wants to track into our workforce.”

CTC commissioners requested additional data to better understand TPA’s impact on BIPOC teacher candidates.

If the CTC does not act in a timely manner, CTA is prepared to move forward. At the October 22–23 CTA State Council, delegates approved of a sponsored legislation

Comments from a 2023 CTA survey of 1,284 members with 10 or fewer years of teaching:

“As a student, I was never good at tests and for this to be what was to determine if I was a good teacher (passing) or a bad teacher (failing) was a lot of added stress. I did not want to fail myself or my family since I am a first-generation student.”

“It felt that I was just expected to just give Pearson another \$200 check for them to fail me.”

“I failed 3 times. I knew I was a great teacher, passing all evaluations, recommended to mentor other teachers who passed the TPAs. But you have to play the TPA game and write [to] the liking of your grader.”

“Failing this test literally sent me into a depressive episode. I quit a lucrative career to teach and I was absolutely devastated by the results of my test. Today I am a competent, loved, respected teacher by kids and staff and in no way did the TPA help me with that.”

proposal to eliminate the TPA requirement for teacher candidates in California. The process is expected to take several months, and the Educator will continue to cover this story. ■

**There is also the Fresno Assessment of Student Teaching (FAST), serving students that attend Fresno State University for their teacher education.*

Pullquotes used in this story are excerpted from the CTA survey of 1,284 CTA members with 10 or fewer years teaching.



Vote With California Educators

Key races and ballot initiatives in the March Primary Election

CALIFORNIA'S PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ELECTION takes place March 5, 2024; the General Election takes place Nov. 5, 2024. Multiple key races and initiatives are expected on the ballots at the local, state and national level — with many outcomes affecting public education, workers' rights and more. There are 2,000 2024 school board races in California alone.

Know that when you follow CTA recommendations on candidates and important initiatives, you are voting to support California students, schools and colleges. CTA's recommendation process is democratic and rigorous (see sidebar).

CTA recommendations, an election guide, voter registration links and other resources are in the election section of the CTA website at cta.org/election. Information will be updated regularly throughout 2024 so be sure to check for the latest.

CTA 2024 Recommended Candidates and Initiatives

ON THE MARCH PRIMARY BALLOT:


YES on Proposition 1, the Mental Health Service Act. This \$6.35 billion bond measure would build new behavioral and treatment settings across the state to help Californians with the deepest mental health needs. Proposition 1 will promote accountability with results for people with mental health and substance use disorders, including for children and youth, veterans, and unhoused people.

ON THE NOVEMBER 2024 BALLOT:

NO on the Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act. This is an attack by wealthy corporations and real-estate developers on one of the fundamentals of our democracy, majority rule. CTA believes that any local,

state measure or initiative should be passed by 50% plus one, not a supermajority that could become an unreasonable hurdle for schools and other public services to overcome in order to get new funding. The measure would put our students, our schools, and vital services we all depend on at risk.

YES on the Protect and Retain the Majority Vote Act.

This will prevent future attacks on majority vote democracy and unreasonable obstacles to school and other vital service funding. CTA believes majority rule should be enshrined in our state Constitution so that wealthy corporations and developers can't throw up undemocratic roadblocks to funding public education and other vital services. 

CTA’s candidate recommendations in nearly 80 state senate and assembly districts:

2024 Candidate Recommendations

DISTRICT CANDIDATE

Assembly

AD 2	Jim Wood (D)
AD 4	Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (D)
AD 6	Paula Villescaz (D)
AD 7	Porsche Middleton (D)
AD 10	Stephanie Nguyen (D)
AD 11	Lori Wilson (D)
AD 12	Damon Connolly (D)
AD 15	Anamarie Avila Farias (D)
AD 16	Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (D)
AD 17	Matt Haney (D)
AD 18	Mia Bonta (D)
AD 19	No Recommendation
AD 20	Liz Ortega (D)
AD 21	Diane Papan (D)
AD 23	Marc Berman (D)
AD 24	Alex Lee (D)
AD 25	Ash Kalra (D)
AD 26	Evan Low (D)
AD 27	Esmeralda Soria (D)
AD 28	Gail Pellerin (D)
AD 29	Speaker Robert Rivas (D)
AD 30	Dawn Addis (D)
AD 31	Joaquin Arambula (D)
AD 34	No Recommendation
AD 35	Dr. Jasmeet Bains (D)
AD 36	Eduardo Garcia (D)
AD 37	Gregg Hart (D)
AD 38	Steve Bennett (D)
AD 39	Juan Carrillo (D)
AD 40	Pilar Schiavo (D)
AD 41	John Harabedian (D)
AD 42	Jacqui Irwin (D)
AD 43	Luz Rivas (D)
AD 44	Steve Pierson (D)
AD 46	Jesse Gabriel (D)
AD 47	Christy Holstege (D)
AD 48	Brian Tabatabai (D)
AD 49	Mike Fong (D)
AD 50	Robert Garcia (D)
AD 51	Rick Chavez Zbur (D)
AD 52	Ari Ruiz (D)

DISTRICT CANDIDATE

AD 53	Javier Hernandez (D)
AD 54	Mark Gonzalez (D)
AD 55	Isaac Bryan (D)
AD 56	Lisa Calderon (D)
AD 57	Sade Elhawary (D)
AD 58	Ronaldo Fierro (D)
AD 61	Tina McKinnor (D)
AD 62	Jose Solache (D)
AD 64	Blanca Pacheco (D)
AD 65	Mike Gipson (D)
AD 66	Al Muratsuchi (D)
AD 67	Sharon Quirk-Silva (D)
AD 68	Avelino Valencia (D)
AD 69	Josh Lowenthal (D)
AD 73	Cottie Petrie-Norris (D)
AD 74	Chris Duncan (D)
AD 76	Joseph Rocha (D)
AD 77	Tasha Boerner (D)
AD 78	Chris Ward (D)
AD 79	Neutral

Senate

SD 3	Rozzana Verder-Aliga (D)
SD 5	Rhodesia Ransom (D)
SD 7	Kathryn Lybarger (D)
SD 9	Marisol Rubio (D)
SD 11	No Recommendation
SD 13	Josh Becker (D)
SD 15	Dave Cortese (D)
SD 17	John Laird (D)
SD 19	Lisa Middleton (D)
SD 21	Monique Limón (D)
SD 23	Kipp Mueller (D)
SD 25	Sasha Renée Pérez (D)
SD 27	Henry Stern (D)
SD 29	Eloise Gomez Reyes (D)
SD 31	Sabrina Cervantes (D)
SD 33	Lena Gonzalez (D)
SD 35	Michelle Chambers (D)
SD 37	Josh Newman (D)
SD 39	Akilah Weber (D)

2024 Initiative Recommendations

SUPPORT

Proposition 1: Governor Gavin Newsom and the legislature placed a major transformation of the state's behavioral health care system on the March Primary ballot as Proposition 1. Prop. 1 has a General Obligation Bond for construction of behavioral health treatment and residential care settings and permanent supportive housing. The proposal recognizes and supports the critical need to expand a culturally competent and well-trained behavioral health care workforce to address behavioral health capacity shortages and expand access to services. Prop. 1 will promote accountability with results for people with mental health and substance use disorders, including for children and youth, veterans and unhoused people.

OPPOSE

Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability

Act: This is an attack by wealthy corporations and real-estate developers on one of the fundamentals of our democracy. CTA believes any local, state measure or initiative should be passed by 50% plus one, not a supermajority. The measure would put vital services we all depend on at risk.

SUPPORT

ACA 13/Protect and Retain the Majority Vote Act: For the reasons above and to prevent future attacks on majority rule democracy, CTA believes majority rule should be enshrined in our state Constitution.



Our Union's Recommendation Process

CTA's recommendation process

involves interview teams of local educators from throughout the state, who interview candidates and evaluate them on a variety of criteria, including:

- Their positions on and vision for K–12, community college and higher education issues.
- Their historical support for public education, students and educators, in such areas as education funding, budget stability, safe schools and campuses for all students, collective bargaining, educator professional rights, charter school accountability, and equal access to higher education.
- Their viability for success in the office that they are seeking.

Teams then make their recommendations to the CTA Board for discussion before being brought to CTA State Council (CTA's top policy-making body, with 800 delegates), which debates and makes final recommendations.



Register! Engage! Vote!

MAKE SURE you are registered to vote: Go to sos.ca.gov/elections to check or to register. The last day to register to vote is Feb. 20, 2024.

Be an engaged, informed voter. Talk with friends, family and colleagues about public education and labor issues. Read up on relevant bills and initiatives at cta.org/election to understand the issues and CTA's positions.

Don't forget to build your personalized voter guide: Go to cta.yourvoter.guide.



2023 LEGISLATIVE GAINS

MULTIPLE BILLS that CTA co-sponsored or supported were signed into law in 2023, including:

Permanent Status: Adult Education Teachers

(AB 897 — McCarty); CTA co-sponsored.

Allows adult education teachers to obtain permanent status, commencing July 1, 2024, and requires a probationary employee of an adult education program to be deemed to have served a complete school year if the employee serves for at least 75% of the hours constituting a full-time equivalent position for adult education programs in the school district.

Employment: leave for reproductive loss

(SB 848 — Rubio); CTA supported.

Extends existing unpaid bereavement leave benefits (five days) to individuals who suffer from child loss events, including miscarriage or a failed adoption.

Occupational safety: workplace violence: restraining orders and workplace violence prevention plan

(SB 553 — Cortese); CTA supported.

Authorizes a collective bargaining representative of an employee to seek a temporary restraining order and an order after hearing on behalf of the employee and other employees at the workplace; requires every employer to 1) establish, implement and maintain an effective workplace violence prevention plan (WVPP); 2) record incident information in a violent incident log; 3) provide effective training to employees on the WVPP, when changes are made to the plan and when new/previously unrecognized workplace violence hazards are identified; 4) create and maintain records of workplace violence hazard identification, evaluation and correction; violent incident logs; and workplace incident

investigation records. Requires the Division of Occupational Safety and Health to enforce the WVPP including proposing, by Dec. 1, 2025, plan standards.

Pupil enrollment: class size: report

(SB 872 — Min); CTA supported.

Requires the California Department of Education (CDE) to provide an annual public report of public school enrollment information for the public to easily determine information regarding class size for each school site in every school district, county office of education (COE) and charter school.

Instructional materials and curriculum: diversity

(AB 1078 — Jackson); CTA supported.

Prohibits a governing board from refusing to use or prohibits the use of any textbook, instructional material, supplemental instructional material, or other curriculum for classroom instruction or any book or other resource in a school library on the basis that includes a study of the role and contribution of any individual or group as specified as part of the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful Education Act. Specifies that a complaint may be filed with the school district, COE or charter school under the Uniform Complaint Procedures or with the State Superintendent of Public Instruction if there is a violation. Governing boards will have an opportunity to remedy the deficiency in textbooks and materials; if a board fails to purchase appropriate textbooks/materials, they will be purchased for them and deducted from future apportionments.

Continued on Page 35

LOS GATOS CHAPTER BEATS BACK EXTREMISTS



FOR THE MEMBERS of Los Gatos Elementary Teachers Association (LGETA), keeping inclusivity in their classrooms without the influence of outside groups aiming to erode public education is a top priority.

In October, more than 27 educators and multiple families showed up to the Los Gatos Union Elementary School District Board of Trustees meeting to stop a proclamation from a parent group that November be declared “parents’ rights month.” At school board meetings across California and the country, similar efforts by outside groups — who have no connections to local communities — have led to anti-LGBTQ+ policies such as Pride Flag bans and outing trans student policies. They’ve also led to banning books and attempts to omit truths about the role of race from history textbooks and other curriculum.

LGETA educators and local families came to the board meeting unified and with powerful messages that showed unshakable solidarity in the belief that all students deserve

great public schools (a few LGETA members, above).

“What resonated with our members is that the district has never received such a request from an outside organization,” said LGETA President Bobby Ruyle. “This outside organization is part of a network of groups seeking to undermine public education and reduce the safety of all students.

“Our educators care deeply for our students and want nothing more than to have a safe learning environment for all. Allowing political actors to drive our educational policy is simply unacceptable.”

School board members were deeply moved by the educator and parent unity. The board unanimously decided to abandon the proclamation — an example of what can happen when educators, families and community work together. —*Gabriella Landeros*

Continued from Page 34

Pupil health: opioid overdose prevention and treatment: Melanie’s Law (SB 10 — Cortese); CTA supported.

States the Legislature’s encouragement of COEs to establish a county working group on fentanyl education in schools for outreach, building awareness and collaborating with local health agencies regarding fentanyl overdoses; requires the CDE to curate/maintain online informational materials for school staff, pupils and parents/guardians on how to prevent opioid overdoses; in collaboration with the California Health and Human Services Agency, to establish a state working group on fentanyl education in schools, to promote public education, awareness and prevention of fentanyl overdoses, with outreach to school staff and pupils. Requires a school to 1) notify pupils and parents/guardians of the informational materials; 2) develop a comprehensive safety plan with protocol in the event a pupil is suffering or believed to be suffering from an opioid overdose.

Local educational agency: Medi-Cal billing option (AB 483 — Muratsuchi); CTA co-sponsored.

Requires the LEA Billing Option Program guide to include a manual with an explanation of billing, auditing, costs reporting, time studies and federal and state compliance rules, and an explanation of the certified public expenditure processes used to report and reconcile program costs from interim reimbursement to final cost settlement; requires the Department of Health Care Services to distribute an updated program guide to participating LEAs by July 1, 2024.

School district governing boards: meetings: school district superintendents and assistant superintendents: termination (SB 494 — Newman); CTA supported.

Prohibits the governing board of a school district from taking action to terminate a superintendent or assistant superintendent of the school district, or both, without cause, at a special or emergency meeting of the governing board or within 30 days after the first convening of the governing board after a general election.

BARGAINING UPDATE

Compiled by **Julian Peoples** and **Frank Wells**



SAN FRANCISCO:

Strike vote leads to historic agreement

After voting overwhelmingly on Oct. 11 to authorize a strike, **United Educators of San Francisco** (UESF) won an agreement that gives teachers and paraeducators much-needed pay increases.

“With incredible support from parents and the community, we were firmly committed to ensuring that educators are valued and respected, that students get the kind of schools they deserve, and that the district provide resources to enhance the recruiting and retention of educators,” said UESF President Cassandra Curiel. “This historic agreement is the first time there was such an emphasis on giving paraeducators meaningful and equitable compensation to ensure that we can help stabilize our schools.”

Key highlights of the two-year tentative agreement:

- Average increase to annual salary for certificated educators: 19.4%;
- ESPs to receive minimum salary of \$30 per hour or 8% increase (whichever is greater) in year one and a 5% increase in year two;
- Longevity pay to help SFUSD retain educators that know SF students;
- Average increase to the hourly wage for ESPs including longevity: 39%;
- Substitute educators will see a 15% raise over two years;
- Additional wins include gains for fully staffed schools, improved working conditions, student support, protections from poor management decisions, community schools and special education.



▲ At left, the moment UESF educators reached an agreement; inset, UESF President Cassandra Curiel and bargaining team member Michelle Cody,



AUBURN:

Fighting for safe schools, drinking water

Auburn Union Teachers Association (AUTA) members packed a school board meeting in November to share school safety concerns and demand accountability and action. There is a lack of safe drinking water at Auburn schools, forcing teachers to bring water to ensure students have clean water to drink. District administration has failed to address the issue, even chastising some teachers for letting students “drink too much” bottled water then asking for more.

“Teachers are fleeing our district,” said AUTA President Sara Liebert. “Our students and staff deserve to have drinking water, safe schools and clean and sanitary classrooms.”

AUTA members took their fight for safe class sizes all the way to mediation — and won a resolution, including an agreement that ended bargaining for the 2022–23 school year, which had been ongoing for more than a year.



Virtual educators file unfair practice charges

California Virtual Educators United (CVEU) continues organizing around a bargaining impasse with California Virtual Academies (CAVA), a public online charter school with close ties to K12/Stride Inc., a Virginia-based for-profit corporation that specializes in online schools.

Four sessions with a state mediator have so far failed to achieve a settlement, and CVEU has filed two unfair practice charges with the Public Employment Relations Board, one over CAVA's failure to comply with information requests concerning the 60% of its budget that goes out of state to K12/Stride. CAVA spends substantially less of its budget on teacher salaries than traditional brick and mortar public schools, and CVEU members earn significantly less than the state average.

"CAVA management continues to violate their previous settlement agreement, and to drag their heels or completely refuse to prepare to bargain in good faith," said CVEU President Nicole Piper. "Not only do educators need this information to bargain effectively, but California taxpayers deserve transparency on how their tax dollars are being used in a publicly funded charter, as well as its financial ties to an out-of-state corporate giant like K12/Stride."

CVEU represents educators at CAVA, which is one virtual school with nine charters, and at Insight Schools of California. A sister union, iQ Teachers Association, representing educators at iQLA Academy Los Angeles, is also at impasse. Another mediation session was scheduled for late November.



SAUSALITO:

Teachers win after authorizing strike

The power of educators' unity and willingness to strike for the resources students deserve pushed **Sausalito District Teachers Association** (SDTA) to victory after 10 months of bargaining.

"It took all of us advocating up until the very end because we know our students deserve this and nothing less," said SDTA Bargaining Chair Andrea Burns. "We also know that as educators we should be paid for the professionals we are. Our team worked so hard, and we never gave up."

The agreement with the district includes a 13.57% pay increase over three years retroactive to last year, employee healthcare paid through 2025, binding arbitration and improvements to recruit and retain quality educators.

Said SDTA Co-President Sean St. Denny, "I thank our members for supporting SDTA's bargaining team in advocating for a fair contract that keeps up with the increases in housing and living costs so that we can attract and retain the best educators for our students."



GILROY:

Class size reductions, improved learning conditions

After more than a year of bargaining, **Gilroy Teachers Association** (GTA) members organized and won improved learning conditions, student and educator wellness, and fair compensation to improve educator retention and recruitment.

Highlights of the agreement include a 13% ongoing and retroactive salary increase over two years (2022–2023 and 2023–2024), plus a 4% one-time off-schedule payment for 2023–2024; and reduced class-size ratios of 24 to 1 in grades one through three for 2024–2025 through 2026–2027 with a duty to bargain permanent implementation in 2025–2026.

"We credit members' collective action with our ability to reach an agreement," said GTA President Caitlin Madolora. "Members spoke at board meetings, participated in shows of solidarity at back-to-school nights and districtwide PD days, distributed flyers to parents during school pick-up and drop-off and demonstrated at their sites and (the district) office."



FOLSOM-RANCHO CORDOVA:

Educators urge district to address recruitment/retention

Folsom Cordova Education Association (FCEA) members are organizing and demanding that Folsom Cordova Unified School District invest resources into classrooms that will recruit and retain the best teachers.

Since May, educators have been fighting to get the district to provide the resources all Folsom Cordova students deserve, but the district has refused to budge, failing to change their offer since September.

"The offer is unacceptable and won't help keep good teachers here," said FCEA President Jeannette Sansenbach. "We used to be a destination district for quality education, now it has become a revolving door district. We want our new hires to have a teaching career here and we want to keep our outstanding veteran teachers. We can't do that if we don't have competitive salary and benefits."



▼ SBTB member Kate Lambert wears a virtual petition supporting contract negotiations after the district said holding the banner during a school board meeting would be a "fire hazard."



HARTNELL COLLEGE:

Trustees have misplaced priorities

Faculty at **Hartnell College** have been working without a contract for over a year. The chief issues are a cost-of-living raise and health benefits for part-time faculty. By law, the state provides funding for part-time faculty health care benefits, but college trustees are choosing not to tap those resources. Class size and lab lecture parity are also on the table.

"This college needs to reorder its priorities and invest in the teachers students deserve," said Nancy Schur-Beymer, Hartnell College Faculty Association (HCFA) president. "Between record revenues and a hefty reserve of over 27%, this this district can afford our modest proposals. They choose not to."

Hartnell recently announced its priority to increase management salaries. The college president's salary is ranked number one among the four area colleges and near the top among 14 comparable colleges. Teacher salaries are last across the board. HCFA is shocked that the board is hiring outsiders, at an estimated \$300 an hour, to negotiate the teachers' contract. The chapter is gearing up for mediation in December, followed by fact-finding.



SANTA BARBARA:

Educators Organize, Demand to Bargain

Santa Barbara Teachers Association members are organizing to stop the hemorrhaging of teachers from a district that has been underpaying its teachers and using less of its budget on teacher salaries than required by law. Santa Barbara Unified School District has lost hundreds of teachers over the past two years, and this school year began with many classroom positions unfilled.

SBTA members have been packing school board meetings and demanding that the district get to the bargaining table to address salary and other issues. Procedural delays by the district stalled the start of contract negotiations, which finally began on Nov. 15. At that session, the district made a health benefits proposal but didn't counter SBTA's salary increase proposal.

Because of the high cost of living in the Santa Barbara area and low educator pay, many teachers work second and third jobs, and for many, remaining in the district is unsustainable.

Community Schools Agreement in Whittier

On Oct. 25, **Whittier Elementary Teachers Association** (WETA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Whittier City School District on minimum staffing and infrastructure to build and support quality community schools. This includes a site coordinator at each community school site and a community schools program specialist. The MOU also specifies establishing a district community schools steering committee as well as site-based steering committees, composed of educators, district representatives, students, parents and community members.

"The [community schools] model prioritizes collaborative leadership and practices, and it is our hope that it will further unite educators, families, and community partners to ensure all of our students thrive," wrote WETA President Julie McCarty to chapter members on the WETA website. "Our hope is to get our team in place so that they can attend the community schools trainings, workshops, webinars and learning labs that will ensure we put the best practices in place from the beginning."

WETA continues to bargain its contract with the district, with the next negotiation planned for Jan. 26, 2024.



Ready to secure a brighter financial future?

The CTA 403(b) Retirement Savings Plan stands apart from the rest – with no high fees, surrender charges, or commissions that can eat into your earnings. Discover the superior benefits of our plan.

Start a conversation!





Social Media Toolbox: Highlight Members

Individual voices can show that we are the union!

By Elizabeth Barcelos

WHENEVER I TELL SOMEONE about my job as a social media manager, I'm often asked things like, "How do you think of what to post?" or "Where do your ideas come from?"

Over the years, I've built what I like to call my content toolbox: a collection of communications tools that work for every social media platform. They're changing all the time, but what sticks with people and makes them pause instead of scrolling onward is consistent and translates across platforms.

This time around, we'll be walking through how you can add **member features** to your content toolbox. Or to put it another way: We're going to show the power of highlighting the real people that make up our union. In a time where our movement is being attacked and stigmatized as some big scary Other, it's important to keep this in mind: *We* are the union. **#WeAreCTA** is more than just a hashtag! The union is the individual teachers, faculty, nurses, school psychologists and ESPs that people already know, love and respect.

In this column, I'm featuring social media content from chapters like yours to help inspire you on your content creation journey.



Set aside a day to highlight members of your chapter

Whether you call it Member Monday, Teacher Tuesday, Faculty Friday, or a day you choose, think about the many folks who are members of your chapter. If you highlight one member a week, that's how many weeks of Mondays, Tuesdays, Fridays or whatever day that you potentially have content for!

Educator Spotlight

"I truly believe that public education can be the great equalizer. It has the power to better lives in our community for generations, especially with collaborative community schools."

KARINA VALENCIA
PEA SECRETARY

ELD Teacher - Pittsburg High School

#WeArePEA
#WeAreCTA

Irvine Teachers Association
November 13 at 8:15 PM

This week's Member Spotlight Monday is a post of appreciation for a few members who joined several from our local community in speaking out about a proposed flag policy which was presented at last week's board meeting.

The Exec Board would like to thank these ITA Members who spoke in an effort to protect a historically vulnerable group of students. ❤️

#memberspotlightmonday #memberspotlight #irvineteachersassociation #ita #itastrong #strongertogether #forthekids #teacherlife #teachersofinstagram #advocacy

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Today we recognize and thank the ITA members who spoke at last week's board meeting in opposition to a proposed policy that would have limited flags in IUSD classrooms to only USA or CA state flags. This would have included stickers, posters, decor, etc. which included any other flag. This policy was specifically targeting LGBTQ+ flags.

ita
CTA/nea

Woodbridge High School
JACKIE CANNATA WALKER

As a kid, I always loved animals and nature, so I started environmental advocacy at a young age. Then as I grew older, I got more involved in learning about and advocating for social issues as well. Now as a teacher, I try to implement and learn more ways to advocate for our students, ourselves, our communities, and our planet. I am also constantly impressed by the ways our students advocate for themselves and the causes they care about. Most recently, I spoke at the school board meeting to show support for our LGBTQ+ students and I was so inspired by the students who spoke so bravely and eloquently.

BEN CASE

Northwood High School

"As a music teacher, I see the ensemble as a microcosm of society - it must be collaborative, and ultimately what is good for the individual is good for the group. Displaying a small Pride Flag can be a huge symbol that helps our LGBTQ+ students feel safe and valued in our classroom ensembles, and by supporting and valuing each other's differences, the ensemble's performance becomes far more deep and meaningful."

Turtle Rock IVA/ICIA
SHELLIE BITTNER

There are a variety of studies that reinforce the value of something as simple as a flag or a sticker in helping students feel accepted and represented in the school setting. I felt compelled to share with the board my thoughts as an educator of 23 years regarding the potential for drastic negative effects on our youth should this proposition be accepted into policy.

"If we don't stand up for children, then we don't stand for much."
-Marian Wright Edelman.

1 comment 1 share

You can keep it as simple as a photo and short bio or fun fact. If you're up for it, get fancy and put together something fun (and easily replicable) in Canva. Here are a few examples from chapters across the state that I think are great as inspiration if you're thinking about doing this with your chapter's social media.

But really, this is about so much more than figuring out what to post each week. This is about our members. Everyone deserves a chance to shine. Everyone deserves to feel seen and heard and a part of their union. This is a small but powerful way to help folks, especially rank and file members, feel a stronger sense of belonging and ownership of their union power.

Let's get started!

Okay, so you're ready to start featuring members on your social media channels. How do you start collecting content about your amazing members? I've found that the easier you make things for the people you want to feature, the more people will actually participate.

Based on the forms I've used in the past to collect content for CTA's social media features, here's a template you can use to create a Google form for your social media features: bit.ly/socialfeaturesform. You'll get all the info you need to start creating member profiles and keep it organized.

My inspiration comes first and foremost from you, our mighty CTA members. If you're not already following other chapters on social media, check out cta.org/social for a list of social media links for chapters from across the state.

I love highlighting your work in this space, so if you've seen any memes for union educators that make you lol or member profiles that you love, send them to ebarcelos@cta.org. I might even feature them in a future column! ■

Elizabeth Barcelos is CTA's social media editor.

In their own words

When you're trying to get your message out, there is no stronger messenger than a real person speaking from the heart. If you want to step up your game of featuring your members, use your chapter's platforms to uplift their voices by sharing their own words.

Whether your member spotlights are about evergreen issues like community schools or more timely things happening on the school board, people are far more likely to stop scrolling for a second and read what you have to say when it's coming from a familiar face.





5 Principles of Effective Mentors

Great mentors cultivate core competencies in themselves and their mentees via a collaborative, supportive relationship

By **Juan Francisco Resendez**

SIXTEEN YEARS AGO, when I was a student teacher, I was filled with the same excitement and trepidation that I now witness in the first-year teachers with whom I work. For me, a mentor made all the difference: Mr. Antenore led fascinating discussions that made history relevant to his students, and he taught courageously for justice before doing so was celebrated.

What's more, he gave me — a new teacher — the space to take intellectual risks, the right support when I was struggling, and capacity-building resources that have stayed with me throughout my career.

I often wonder what would've happened if I had lost the student teaching lottery and been assigned a less-skilled mentor. What if I didn't have access to an environment where equity and social justice were centered? Would I still be a teacher?

After a decade and a half in education, having mentored multiple student teachers and taught social studies methods to dozens more, I have concluded that what makes mentors like Mr. Antenore special is that they honor their mentees' humanity, model teacher leadership, and embody humility, courage and care. We can all apply these principles to become more effective mentors in our own practice.

1. Honor the humanity of your mentee

Great mentors see their mentees as equals and partners in the work of empowering students, and they collaborate with them to create the most effective professional development plan possible. I remember asking Mr. Antenore to leave the classroom from time to time during my student teaching journey so that I could develop my own voice and create better relationships with my students. He was always supportive

and would check in after. The mutual trust that we built in these moments radically enhanced my self-confidence at a critical time in my development as a teacher.

2. Model teacher leadership

Realistic optimism is a powerful part of mentoring. It means being critical thinkers and analyzers of the institutions in which we work. But it also means maintaining hope that those institutions can become more just — and sharing strategies for advocacy if possible.

In my own leadership, I attempt to model this approach by advocating for the needs of students in interactions with my colleagues and administration. I also pursue advocacy opportunities outside of my district.

Great mentors have a deep commitment to equity and only speak of students and colleagues constructively. They embody professional norms in all settings, especially when colleagues disagree. At my school site, we fully include our mentees in our robust professional learning community process, as well as all staff development, to support their professional growth.

3. Practice humility, and be open to new ideas

Another facet of effective mentoring is demonstrating through your actions how you continue to develop your emotional and pedagogical capacities throughout your career. Doing so creates a culture of reciprocity and knowledge-building, as it demonstrates that you are willing to learn from your mentees as much as you are willing to teach them.

Mr. Antenore and I used to have energizing conversations about the civic meaning of our discipline and how to best deliver that meaning to students. He would inspire me with ideas about what to teach, and I would inspire him with new ideas about how to teach it.

4. Have the courage to take public risks

Risk-taking holds tremendous growth potential, and great mentors model this by implementing lessons outside of their own comfort zones. They use evidence-based strategies to meet the dynamic cultural, academic and intellectual needs of their students and can explain the “why” behind their decision making.

As a teacher, I must be comfortable embracing change at

a moment’s notice. When I’m mentoring, I bring my mentee into the fold. I present my new lesson ideas to hear their thoughts. I also love to implement lessons that my mentees design, helping them work through their goals and processes along the way.

We have open dialogues about mistakes and successes and what we must do next to hone our practice, which builds mentee confidence and provides a model for mentees to then encourage productive risk-taking with their own students.

5. Nurture your mentee

Stay in the classroom as much as possible while your mentee is teaching to observe and coach them discreetly and positively. While doing so, prioritize the balance of allowing them to engage in productive struggle as they take necessary risks to support students without letting them drown to see if they can cut it.

At the end of most lessons, Mr. Antenore would guide me with cogent questioning and gentle feedback so that I could arrive at good answers to the many classroom challenges that I encountered and would continue to encounter throughout my career.

While there are many other traits that mentors can embody to best support new teachers, these five capacities center students and provide a solid foundation. In a time when schools are struggling to find highly competent educators in many disciplines, it’s imperative that we ensure that those who decide to become teachers have the support that they — and their students — need to thrive. Highly effective mentors have the power to set up a future teacher for long-term success, impacting thousands of students for the better. ■

Juan Francisco Resendez, Irvine Teachers Association, is a high school civics, world history and religions teacher. He also teaches social studies methods at UC Irvine and is a Teach Plus California Policy Fellowship alumnus. This story originally appeared in Edutopia.

“Highly effective mentors have the power to set up a future teacher for long-term success, impacting thousands of students for the better.”

▼ CTA President Goldberg addresses State Council.

Stand With CTA!

October State Council offers joy, hope and power

The October 21–22 CTA State Council of Education kicked off with a treat: A group of local musicians, including two members from the Grammy Award-winning band Ozomatli, welcomed delegates from the stage with lively music and smiles.

The good feelings were infectious as the Council settled down to business. CTA President David B. Goldberg, in a rousing first report to Council as president, noted that one-third of the delegates were new — and part of a legacy of union solidarity and action that has played an important role in public education.

“Within these walls, we’ve all made decisions and commitments that have shaped our future and strengthened public education,” he said. “Our presence together today is another example of our commitment to our collective fight for the schools our students deserve.”

CTA’s power, Goldberg said, stems from its locals and the “lived experiences of our members” at sites across the state. He added that CTA is committed to ensuring that locals have the necessary resources to engage every member and build power in every school site across California. (The CTA Board is dedicating \$60 million over the next two years to provide release time to every local president across the state to help chapters achieve their goals through strategic campaigns and member engagement.)

This power means that the Council’s work, such as recommending candidates and causes and supporting legislation at the State Capitol in Sacramento, has a big impact in communities statewide.

Goldberg mentioned sponsored legislation that CTA is currently working on:

- Elimination of Teaching Performance Assessments (TPAs), which are harmful in preparing our educators (see our story on page 26);



“Our ability to win transformative funding for our public schools and fight back against extremism is dependent on us bringing our true member power to the table.”

—CTA President **David Goldberg**

- Fixing the outdated and dysfunctional family leave system by mandating 14 weeks of fully paid maternity leave.

He also mentioned how CTA and locals can use their power to fight back against extremist school boards that are harming students and educators. “With more than 2,000 school board races next year, we have an opportunity to hold the line for each other and our communities and engage in a massive collective act of resistance to those attacking our students and public schools,” he said.

Later that morning, the Council delegates considered, debated and approved recommendations on multiple state assembly, senate and congressional district candidates up for election in the March 2024 Primary. Council took a neutral position on candidates running to represent California in the United States Senate. (See page 31 for these and other recommendations.)

CTA’s Racial Equity Affairs Committee members spoke eloquently about the American Indian/Alaska Native community and urged delegates to attend its observance later that evening. CTA Board members and leaders gave a moving presentation for Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

On Sunday morning, Goldberg announced that Executive Director Joe Boyd would be leaving CTA in March 2024. Boyd’s

▼ State Council delegates vote.



◀ Alum Rock Educators Association member Veronica Talton joined musicians including Ozomatli bassist Wil-Dog Abers (at right) onstage.



◀ United Educators of San Francisco President Cassandra Curiel, center and UESF members thank Council for help in securing a tentative agreement with its school district.

speech to Council touched on his gratitude for the privilege of working at CTA, but mostly focused on the need to push back on those who seek to undermine public education and society's democratic institutions.

"If we don't all stand up now, the attacks will all come to each and every one of us sooner or later," he said. "Let's fight back against hate and intolerance with love and empathy that is laced with organized people and righteous power."

Council elected the following NEA Directors:

District 7 — Lorraine Richards

District 11 — Yulil Alonso-Garza

The General Session on Saturday ended with a song that the band wrote specifically for the occasion, "Stand With Me." Goldberg led into the song by exhorting the crowd to "stand with me" to fight to reimagine our public schools; for the contracts to keep educators in our profession; to fight racism, sexism and homophobia; to take on corporate greed. "We are the ones we've been waiting for!" ■

For more on President Goldberg's report to State Council, visit cta.org/educator. The next State Council of Education meeting will be held Jan. 26–28 in Los Angeles.

▼ From left: Brenda Walker, Megan Harwell, Edgar Díaz



Panel on Extremism in Education

WITH LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

across the state working to defend their students and schools from extremists, a special panel convened Saturday afternoon featuring three educators who are leading the fights in their communities. Brenda Walker from Associated Chino Teachers, Megan Harwell from Kern County Education Association and Edgar Díaz from Temecula Valley Education Association spoke about the impact of attacks from extremist school board members on their students and community, and shared tips for what to do when extremists attack honest, inclusive education and the rights of LGBTQ+ students in school communities.

"These policies are meant to make people uncomfortable and divide," Díaz said. "Don't argue on their terms — you have to continue to push for what's important to you."

Discussion included the legal aspects of the attacks, the messages that have been helpful in building unity in local communities, and important steps for chapters to take now to have successful outcomes in school board races.

TOP of the CLASS

The 2024 California Teachers of the Year

FIVE OUTSTANDING EDUCATORS from across the state — all CTA members — were named the 2024 California Teachers of the Year in October.

“They make profound differences in their students’ lives and provide both inspiration and the practical tools that students need to succeed,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond in a statement announcing the news. “They’re all prime examples of the exceptional work going on in California schools.”

Thurmond commended the tremendous impact the educators have had in their schools and on their students and communities, saying they “display deep commitment and innovation in their work — all while supporting their students through a difficult time.”

The five will serve as ambassadors for the profession and representatives of the state for the calendar year. Presented by the California Department of Education and supported by the California Teachers of the Year Foundation, the California Teachers of the Year Program began in 1972 to honor standout teachers and encourage and inspire new teachers to enter the profession. ■

The 2024 California Teachers of the Year:



CASEY CUNY, a member of **Hart District Teachers Association**, is a high school honors English and Senior Myth and Folklore teacher at William S. Hart High School and Valencia High School in the William S. Hart Unified School District (Los Angeles County).

A childhood cancer survivor, Cuny has spoken about how his teachers were instrumental during that time, especially in the aftermath; “they taught me what I was capable of and pushed me to do all these different things,” eventually inspiring him to go into teaching.

Thurmond nominated Cuny as California’s representative for the National Teacher of the Year competition. The 2024 National Teacher of the Year will be announced in the spring.



JOSEPH ALVARICO, a member of **Mt. Diablo Education Association**, is a high school Engineering Essentials, Introduction to Engineering Design, and honors computer teacher at Ygnacio Valley High School in the Mount Diablo Unified School District (Contra Costa County).



ANDREW “DREW” LEWIS, a member of **United Teachers Los Angeles/NEA**, is a high school music teacher at Ramon C. Cortines School of Visual and Performing Arts in the Los Angeles Unified School District.



HANNAH RODRIGUEZ, a member of **Duarte Unified Education Association**, is a prekindergarten special education teacher at Beardslee Dual Language Immersion Academy in the Duarte Unified School District (Los Angeles County).



GREGORY WOLF, a member of **Santa Ynez Valley Teachers Association**, is a high school dual-enrollment U.S. History, dual-enrollment political science, and Advanced Placement psychology teacher at Santa Ynez Valley Union High School in the Santa Ynez Valley Union High School District (Santa Barbara County).

The teachers of the year will be honored at a gala in January or February 2024. They will also be recognized at CTA State Council in March 2024. For more information about the awards program and application process, visit cde.ca.gov/ta/sr/ct/.

DON'T JUST ADVANCE YOUR CAREER AS AN EDUCATOR. ADVANCE EDUCATION.

- Preliminary Administrative Services Credential
- M.A. in Educational Leadership
- M.Ed. in Teacher Leadership
- Doctorate in Educational Leadership (K-12 or Higher Ed)

Financial Aid and Scholarships Available

(805) 493-3325

clugrad@CalLutheran.edu

Scan the code or learn more at
CalLutheran.edu/GSOE



Dr. Jason Peplinski, '14
Doctorate in Educational
Leadership

Dr. Kristen Walker, '20
Doctorate in Educational
Leadership (K-12)

Graduate School
of Education

California
Lutheran
University

Scholarships, Grants, Awards, Oh My!

CTA offers many programs for deserving members, their dependents and friends of public education

▼ Student: Gaia Magana-Sugars, grades 5-6, Reg. 3; teacher: Samantha Weiss, Palos Verdes Faculty Association.



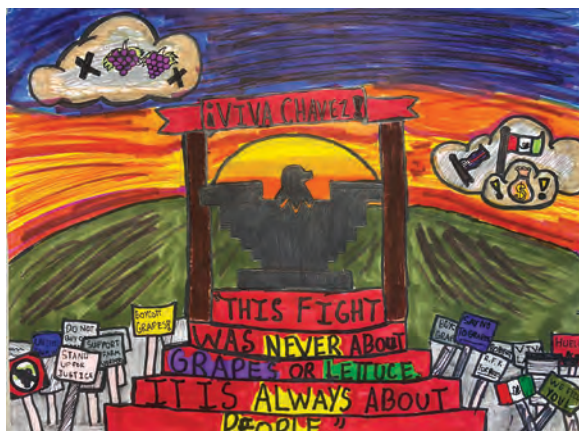
▼ Student: Giselle Soto, grades 1-2, Region 1; teacher: Naqiba Gregory, West Sacramento Teachers Association.



▼ Student Halia Lewis, grades 9-12, Region 2; teacher: Joy Cornish-Bowden, Tracy Education Association.



▶ Student: Valerie Ramos, grades 7-8, Region 3; teacher: Cecilia Silveyra, Montebello Teachers Association.



▼ Student: Mario Enríquez Pérez Sánchez, grades 3–4, Region 3; teacher: Griselda Fernández Herrera, Oxnard Education Association.

▼ Student: Mia Miranda, grades 9–12, Region 1; teacher: Rosa Baizas Valenzuela, San Jose Teachers Association.



HAVE YOU OR A MEMBER of your community made a positive impact on public education? Do you have a great project idea for your students and need funding? Has your involvement (or your colleagues' involvement) in local politics or human and civil rights made a difference?

CTA offers many scholarships, grants and awards that recognize educators and members of the community who promote quality public education and have a positive impact on their students and community.

And now is the time to start preparing to apply for some of them. This includes working with your students on visual artwork and written essays for the César E. Chávez and Dolores Huerta Education Awards Program (a few of last year's winning artworks are on these pages).

Deadlines approaching soon:

- The **State Gold Award** recognizes individuals or organizations whose leadership and actions show they are true friends of public education. Deadline to apply is Jan. 5, 2024.
- The **Member-in-Politics Award in Honor of Ted Bass** and the **Chapter-in-Politics Award in Honor of Joyce Fadem** recognize an outstanding teacher and chapters for their contributions to the education profession through political action. Deadline to apply is Feb. 2, 2024.
- Applications for the **CTA scholarships for CTA members, dependent children and CTA Aspiring Educators members** of up to \$5,000 are due Feb. 9, 2024. These scholarships, meant to be used for education-related purposes, include:
 - The **Scholarship for Dependent Children**; 35 scholarships up to \$5,000 each.
 - The **Scholarship in Honor of Del A. Weber**, for a dependent child of an active member of CTA, CTA/NEA-Retired or deceased CTA member who is attending or attended a continuation high school or an alternative education program; up to \$5,000.
 - The **Scholarship for Members** offers a maximum of five scholarships of up to \$3,000 each.

Giving Thanks

Recipients of CTA scholarships often send notes mentioning what the recognition and funds mean to them. A few examples from 2023 winners:

“The scholarship serves as a beacon of hope and encouragement, inspiring me to make a lasting impact on the lives of students, just as Dr. King did. I am profoundly grateful for this life-changing opportunity, which will undoubtedly shape my future as an educator and empower me to create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment.”

—**David Ugonna Ifediba**, recipient of a 2023 CTA Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarship

“My background as a Cambodian-American woman who grew up in poverty influences me to support underserved and diverse communities in Long Beach. I am thrilled to teach my students how to learn history, and also learn how to be critical thinkers, resourceful and kind.”

—**Davy Yap**, recipient of a 2023 CTA Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Scholarship

“I have always been proud of my mom and her career as a teacher. I have watched as her passion as an educator made such a positive impact on the lives of the children she teaches, and today, CTA has made such an incredible impact on mine. It is an honor and a privilege to be the recipient of this scholarship.”

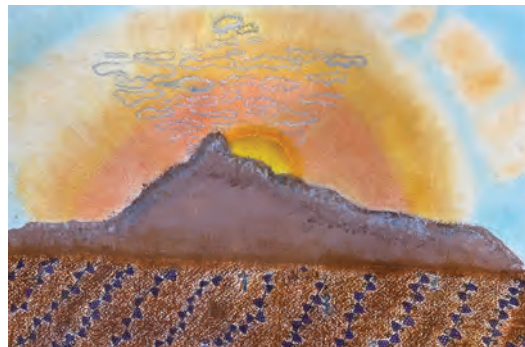
—**Nikolas Gerber**, recipient of a 2023 CTA Dependent Children Scholarship

“Your belief in my abilities has instilled in me a renewed sense of determination to make the most of this opportunity. I promise to work diligently, push my boundaries, and strive for excellence in my studies.”

—**Aiden T. Nevarez**, recipient of a 2023 CTA Dependent Children Scholarship

- The **Aspiring Educators Scholarship in Honor of L. Gordon Bittle** offers a maximum of three scholarships of up to \$5,000 each.
- The **Martin Luther King Jr Memorial Scholarship Program**, with scholarships up to \$6,000 each, encourages BIPOC students to become educators, school nurses, school counselors or school therapists and to promote professional growth for BIPOC teachers and ESP members. Applications are due Feb. 23, 2024.
- The **César E. Chávez and Dolores Huerta Education Awards Program** provides recognition for educators and their students who demonstrate an understanding of the vision and guiding principles embraced by César Chávez and Dolores Huerta. Award amounts for educators and students are each up to \$550. Deadline to apply is March 1, 2024.
- The CTA Institute for Teaching offers grants for members and chapters to demonstrate what educators can do when they have the freedom to create and invent. Competitive educator grants are awarded in amounts up to \$5,000; competitive impact grants

▼ Student: Diana Encarnacion, grades 7-8; teacher: Roxi Romo, Bakersfield Elementary Teachers Association.



are awarded in amounts up to \$20,000. Applications can be submitted online from December through March.

A complete list of CTA awards, scholarships and grants, along with eligibility requirements, criteria, deadlines and nomination and application forms, are available at cta.org/scholarships. ■

THE CTA® CUSTOMIZED CASH REWARDS VISA SIGNATURE® CREDIT CARD

MAXIMIZE YOUR REWARDS

3% CUSTOMIZED CASH BACK

in the category of your choice – now with *enhanced* categories

Gas & EV Charging Stations • Online Shopping, Cable, Internet, Phone Plans & Streaming
Dining • Travel • Drug Stores & Pharmacies • Home Improvement & Furnishings



TO APPLY TODAY: call **888.758.7946** or visit **newcardonline.com** Mention Priority Code HC02QH

PLUS, A

\$200

**Amazon.com
Gift Card Bonus!**

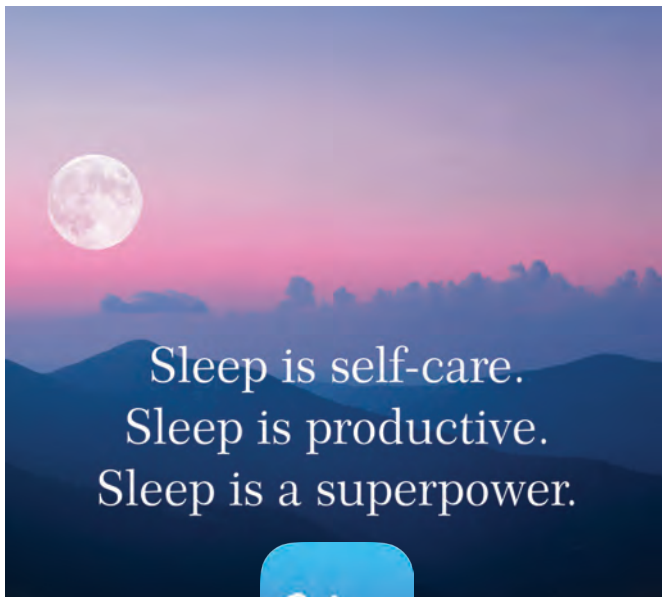
after you make at least \$500 in purchases within the first 90 days of account opening (students not eligible)

This offer is unique to this solicitation. Our credit card offers may vary and this offer may not be available elsewhere, such as, if you visit ctamemberbenefits.org. You can take advantage of this offer when you apply now.

For more information about the rates, fees, other costs and benefits associated with the use of the credit card, call the toll-free number above or visit www.newcardonline.com and refer to the disclosures accompanying the application. Residents of the US and its territories only. See full disclosure for details. Federal law prohibits students from receiving a premium.

Restrictions apply, see amazon.com/gc-legal.

This credit card program is issued and administered by Bank of America, N.A. Visa and Visa Signature are registered trademarks of Visa International Service Association, and are used by the issuer pursuant to license from Visa U.S.A., Inc. Bank of America and the Bank of America logo are registered trademarks of Bank of America Corporation. The Contactless Symbol and Contactless Indicator are trademarks owned by and used with permission of EMVCo, LLC.



SLEEP IS A SUPERPOWER

The Calm app can be key to improving your overall health

THERE'S A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP between sleep and mental health, and just as our respective mental health journeys vary widely, so do our sleep journeys. Sleep and rest are also critical to our physical health: Research shows you're more productive, focused, resilient and creative when you're well rested.

Choosing to prioritize rest in a world that celebrates busyness is not easy. It requires mindfulness, self-awareness and a commitment to make space for rest and sleep. The Calm app, a rest and relaxation app free to CTA members, can help. Its meditation and sleep content can advance your sleep journey and improve your overall health.

The Cleveland Clinic offers tips for better sleep hygiene that include components where the Calm app can easily be used, including:

- 1 Keep consistent sleep and wake times.** Doing this will train your circadian rhythm — your body's natural internal clock — to go to sleep and wake up at appropriate times, and you'll be better primed to fall asleep faster and wake up more refreshed.
- 2 Start winding down an hour before bedtime.** Your best bedtime will depend on how much sleep you need (seven to nine hours is typical). If you need eight hours of sleep, count backward from the time you need to wake up and plan to shut your eyes at the right time. Add an hour beforehand for a calming routine such as reading or taking a warm bath or shower — or using the Calm app. Keep the lights dim and avoid screens.
- 3 Make your room comfy.** Keep your phone, tablet, computer and other screens out of the bedroom. Get a supportive mattress and comfy pillows. Lighting should be minimal, and room temperature on the cool side.
- 4 Cut out bedtime drinking and snacking.** Both can take a toll on your ability to sleep well. Keep an eye on your caffeine and alcohol intake late in the day.
- 5 Calm your mind.** Try the Calm app for meditation, gentle stretches, relaxing music and more.
- 6 Avoid exercise before bed.** Exercising within an hour or two before bedtime can trigger insomnia or difficulty falling asleep.
- 7 See an expert if you need more help.**

Rest is the key to resilience. It's important to remember that a nap won't set you back. An early night won't mean unraveling all your hard work. An afternoon dedicated to restful activities doesn't mean you're unproductive. Take the rest you need — and get Calm! ■

Get Calm

To sign up for your free CTA premium subscription to Calm, visit CTAMemberBenefits.org/Calm. For any questions, please call Member Benefits (650) 552-5200. Or scan the QR code to sign up:



Council to Consider Bylaw Change

THIS BYLAW AMENDMENT is being proposed to change the name of Student California Teachers Association. The proposed amendment to Article III, Article V and Article XII will change the name of Student California Teachers Association (SCTA) to California Teachers Association Aspiring Educators (CTAAE).

Provisos/Transition:

1. For State Council review, debate and possible modification at the January 2024 State Council meeting; and final consideration by written ballot at the January 2024 meeting.
2. Amendment to be effective upon adoption.

2023–2024 Proposed CTA Bylaw Amendment

Legend: Additions are underlined. Deletions are ~~struck through~~. Approved by CTA Board 11/2023.

ARTICLE III — Membership

Student. Any person regularly enrolled in an institution of higher education preparing to become a teacher and eligible to become a member of the ~~Student California Teachers Association~~ CTA Aspiring Educators under the provisions of the governance documents of that association may become a Student member.

ARTICLE V — State Council of Education

Term of Office. The term of office of elected representatives, with the exception of representatives elected by the ~~Student California Teachers Association~~ CTA Aspiring Educators, shall be three years and shall expire June 25 of the year ending the term. When a new office is initiated creating two or more offices in an electoral district, such districts may elect representatives initially for less than the full three-year term to effect staggered terms.

Representatives shall be eligible for reelection but no person may serve more than three consecutive three-year terms. (p.73) (4) Bylaws of the ~~Student California Teachers Association~~ CTA Aspiring Educators may provide for terms of less than three years duration. (p.74)

ARTICLE XII — Student CTA CTA Aspiring Educators

SECTION 1. Composition. The Student members of the Association shall be members of the ~~Student California Teachers Association~~ CTA Aspiring Educators.

SECTION 2. Purposes. The purposes of the ~~Student California Teachers Association~~ CTA Aspiring Educators shall be to provide a means of active cooperation among students in California's colleges and universities preparing to become teachers, and to stimulate professional attitudes among future teachers.

SECTION 3. Constitution and Bylaws. The qualifications of members, the internal organization, the duties of officers, and other matters pertinent to the organization and operation of the ~~Student California Teachers Association~~ CTA Aspiring Educators shall be set forth in its constitution and bylaws, which shall be subject to the ratification and approval of the Board of Directors of the California Teachers Association. Any amendment to or revision of such constitution and bylaws shall also be subject to the ratification and approval of the Board of Directors of the California Teachers Association.

SECTION 4. Advisor. The ~~Student California Teachers Association~~ CTA Aspiring Educators shall be under the general supervision of an advisor appointed by the Executive Director with the approval of the Board of Directors of the Association. The advisor shall present reports of the activities of the ~~Student California Teachers Association~~ CTA Aspiring Educators to the Board of Directors.

SECTION 5. Expenses. The expenses of delegates to regular conferences of the ~~Student California Teachers Association~~ CTA Aspiring Educators, as provided in the Constitution of that Association, and other expenses of the ~~Student California Teachers Association~~ CTA Aspiring Educators as may be approved by the Board of Directors of the California Teachers Association shall be paid by the California Teachers Association.

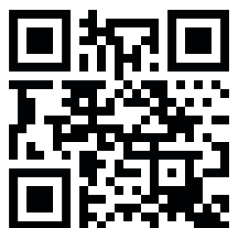
YOU can represent CTA at NEA's convention

CTA members (including ESP), Student CTA members and CTA/NEA-Retired members who wish to run for state delegate to the 2024 NEA Convention must fill out a Declaration of Candidacy and file it by the deadline, Jan. 31, 2024, at 4 p.m. Find the form at cta.org/racandidacy. The CTA Elections Committee will begin accepting state delegates' declarations of candidacy on January 5, 2024. Each candidate filing a declaration will receive an acknowledgment of receipt.

The convention, known as NEA Representative Assembly, will take place July 3-7 in Philadelphia, PA. In keeping with CTA's commitment to minority involvement, members who are people of color are urged to become candidates.

For more information, or if your chapter has not initiated an election by March 18, 2024, contact the CTA Elections Committee at 650-552-5300, or email RA@cta.org.

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



Copyright © 2013, SpatiaLogic.
Q (Higher Education) – Statewide
Two At-Large Directors – Statewide

ABT	\$4,370.74
AGUILAR	\$7,731.31
BARTELL	\$4,477.94
BONACCORSI	\$2,992.03
BORDEN	\$2,549.60
BOYD *	\$6,221.76
BRADFORD	\$3,519.14
BUSHEE	\$3,226.35
DER RAMOS *	\$4,881.95
ECCLES *	\$3,805.02
ELLIS	\$5,095.50
GOLDBERG	\$3,719.14
GRANADO	\$4,157.89
GUPTON	\$2,214.72
HOUSE *	\$2,338.89
JACO	\$2,465.01
JONES	\$3,418.24
KREITZ *	\$3,775.82
LITTMAN	\$3,811.78
MARTINEZ *	\$5,425.99
NORMAND	\$3,012.12
PATTERSON	\$7,403.77
RUIZ	\$6,114.40
SCHUSTER *	\$2,598.79
SHEAFFER	\$4,222.79
TSE *	\$55.47
WILLIAMS *	\$3,489.89

†CTA/NEA Coordinator

CTA Board Expenses

Amounts represent a monthly average for fiscal year 2022-2023. During the reporting year, the normal and statewide activities include CTA Board meetings, State Council, Service Center Council meetings, Equity and Human Rights Conference, Good Teaching Conferences, various task force meetings and other business-related functions. Some differences in expenditures may be due to the widely varied geographical sizes of directorial districts, distances traveled for Regional, Service Center and other meetings, and the varied number of functions CTA Directors are responsible for attending. Expenses of Board members with partial-year service are averaged based on months served and delineated with an asterisk.



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

IT CAN GET BETTER

Educator's hard life experiences inspire students

GROWING UP, Jason Powell was subjected to horrific abuse. His stepfather beat, shot, stabbed, burned and psychologically tormented him throughout his youth, and manipulated him into committing crimes including theft, arson and assault.

The stepfather was finally sent to prison, but Powell's mother died right before he graduated from high school. The teen sought and was granted legal guardianship of his half-sisters, ages 9, 8 and 2, and suddenly became a parent to three children while working three jobs and attending community college.

"I couldn't live for myself, I had to devote my life to them," Powell says, recalling how difficult things were. "I realized that the only thing we actually own is what's in our head — our success, our development. We have a choice and an opportunity and it's 100% on us."

▼ Jason Powell and his wife, former middle school teacher Natalie Weisel-Powell, hold his new book, which is available at Amazon.



Today Powell uses his experiences to motivate seniors in his high school music classes, usually in an end-of-year "pep talk." "I use my life stories to help them see that they can become anything they want to be, regardless of their past or what hurdles life might throw their way. It doesn't matter how bad it is — it can get better, as long as you keep fighting and you're willing to put in the work."

Students have been transformed by his talk. One wrote him several years later, reminding Powell that he wasn't even supposed to be in the class because of anger management issues, and telling him that he had just graduated with a business degree from UC Berkeley — which he credits to Powell.

Now Powell is sharing his story more widely, through "Red-headed Stepchild." "This year I decided to do something brave, something difficult, something that I truly believe could help bring awareness and possibly change to a large demographic of students. I wrote and published an autobiography on the horrors of child abuse, [and how I] somehow made it out as a well-adjusted and successful adult."

Powell, who has a doctorate in education, is a member of Palm Springs Teachers Association and currently teaches symphony

Continued on Page 55

▼ Eigenman leads class discussion.



▼ Steven Quinlan



Superheroes Among Us

Steven Quinlan, English teacher at John Finney High School in Vallejo, and his students recently partnered with Solano County Library Teen Librarian **Star Eigenman** to start a GSA book club. The Vallejo Education Association member reports that turnout for the inaugural event was high considering the continuation school's small size. The book for discussion: *Dreadnought*, by April Daniels, an action novel about a trans superhero.

Continued from Page 54

and choir. But he has also taught mariachi, classical guitar and more. He is in his 16th year at Palm Springs High School, where the total minority enrollment is 86% (71% Hispanic), and 100% of students received free/reduced lunch.

Powell is hopeful “Red-headed Stepchild” will bring visibility to an often-unseen issue. “Many are simply unaware of the realities of the child abuses that are happening in some homes,” he says. “By sharing my past, I believe I can help diminish this gap in understanding and empathy.

“I am hoping educators will use my book to help students know that they have a voice when it comes to their safety, and to inspire our children to become more.” ■

“The only thing we actually own is what’s in our head — our success, our development. We have a choice and an opportunity and it’s 100% on us.”

EDUCATORS: Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse

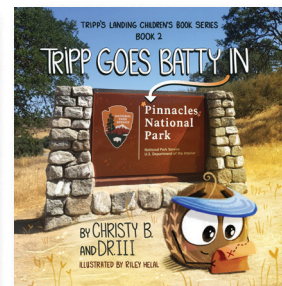
UNDER STATE LAW, educators (including classified staff) are mandated reporters, meaning they have a legal obligation to report knowledge of or reasonable suspicion of child abuse or neglect. According to the California Department of Education (CDE) child abuse and/or child neglect can be any of the following:

- A physical injury inflicted on a child by another person other than by accidental means.
- The sexual abuse, assault or exploitation of a child.
- The negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child by a person responsible for the child’s welfare under circumstances indicating harm or threatened harm to the child’s health or welfare.
- The willful harming or endangerment of the person or health of a child, any cruel or inhumane corporal punishment or any injury resulting in a traumatic condition.

For CDE guidelines on how to identify potential signs of child abuse/neglect as well as how to make a report, go to cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/ap/childabusereportingguide.asp.



▼ Christy and Ed Bray flank Tripp.



TRAVELING WITH TRIPP THE TUMBLEWEED

Schoolkids help craft a new book series about national parks

“WHAT DO I DO when I kick cancer’s butt?” wrote 5th grade teacher Christy Bray on LinkedIn in August, answering her question with “I finally start writing the children’s book I always wanted to write. But instead of just one, I’m going to write 64 books!”

Bray, a member of Dublin Teachers Association in her 26th year of teaching, beat breast cancer two years ago, and felt the timing was right to pursue her passion project. She and her husband Ed, a human resources professional, loved visiting national parks and always thought about how they could bring their beauty and splendor to children. Their book series, geared for children ages 5-12, follows Tripp the Tumbleweed as he travels to all 63 U.S. national parks. (The first book is Tripp’s origin story.)

Thus far, children can read about Tripp’s visits to Death Valley and Pinnacles national parks, with Yosemite coming up. Bray collaborates with young readers for writing assistance with each book.

“I’m engaging 3rd grade classrooms across the country to help determine Tripp’s adventures in each park,” she says. “Involving students in the process supports their writing skills, and they get to learn all the steps that go into writing

a book. Plus, they get some cool ‘thank you’ stickers for helping out, their library gets free copies of the book, and I’m donating 10% of the profits to the school district and 5% to a nonprofit organization supporting the park.”

Bray tries to work with a district local to the national park they are writing about with the intention of getting students excited about visiting it, especially as 4th graders when park admission is free for them and their families. (See everykidoutdoors.gov.) Students answer questionnaires/surveys; their answers are incorporated into the specific book, and then teachers and students provide feedback before the book is published. For example, the Brays collaborated with 80 Soledad Unified School District students on writing about

Tripp’s adventures in Pinnacles National Park.

The Brays, who are self-funding the series, have written 15 books to date and aim to publish about five books per year.

Find more information and to buy the books visit trippthetumbleweed.com or Tripp_the_Tumbleweed on Instagram (where you can also watch Tripp’s animated clip and listen to his catchy theme song).

“I’m engaging 3rd grade classrooms across the country to help determine Tripp’s adventures in each park.”



California's Community Schools

REIMAGINING PUBLIC EDUCATION

Shared decision-making with educators, families, students and communities.

Meeting students where they are. With classes built around their academic needs and the culture of the community.

Providing counseling, wellness centers, childcare and parent education.



LEARN MORE AT
CTA.ORG/COMMUNITYSCHOOLS



**CALIFORNIA
TEACHERS
ASSOCIATION**



CTA Members, take advantage
of Auto and Home/Renters
Insurance that is...

Simple.
Trusted.
Affordable.
Right for you.



California Casualty
AUTO AND HOME INSURANCE



CalCas.com | 1.866.268.1754

CA Lic#0041343 ©2023 CCMC. Available in AZ, CA, CO, ID, KS,
OR & WY. Coverages are subject to availability and eligibility.