



# Your Union, Your Voice Your Newsletter

Hesperia Teachers Association

January 2015

## Your E-Board:

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## Your Rep. Council

**Canyon Ridge**  
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**Carmel**  
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**Cedar**  
Krista Rodriguez  
Renee Singer

**Cottonwood**  
Robert Balder

**Cypress**  
James Fogo

**DO**  
Robert Hargis  
Tina Viarya

**Let's try teaching children HOW to think rather than WHAT to think – Unknown.**

## President's Message

On January 15th Governor Brown released his budget proposal for this year. He has proposed an increase of \$4 billion in LCFF gap funding closure, another \$1.1 billion in one time money for discretionary use including common core implementation, another \$1 billion to eliminate the funding deferrals and funding a COLA increase. Over the last four years there has been a \$7.5 billion dollar increase in the Prop 98 funding!

All of this is possible because of your involvement in the political process. It could not have happened without putting our differences aside and banding together, all of us pulling together for our common cause.

Because of your efforts:

- 84% of the CTA endorsed candidates that support public education were elected,
- 185 local board races were won(our board among them),
- Tom Torlakson, who has fought Arne Duncan on testing, was reelected.

None of these victories could have been achieved without you, our membership. We have the education, knowledge and skills to know what is best for our students. As we look to the future we need to continue organizing ourselves into a single cohesive unit, working together, to join others like us, creating a force of strength that no amount of attacks or money can break!

**Eucalyptus**  
 Kris Holmes  
**Hesperia High School**  
 Ellen Stephen  
 Devon Bostock  
 Jeremy Topete  
 Stephanie Seitz  
**Hesperia Junior High**  
 Cheryl Franks  
 Debbie Herndon  
**Hollyvale**  
 Kathy Brawthen  
**Joshua Circle**  
 Cheryl Cope  
**Juniper**  
 Cynthia Greenlee  
**Kingston**  
 Todd O'Neal  
**Krystal**  
 Jamie Barnhardt  
**Lime**  
 Penny Hale  
 Christine Robinson  
**Maple**  
 Virginia Marquez  
**Mesa Grande**  
 Kelly Denny  
**Mesquite Trails**  
 Louise Oliekan  
**Mission Crest**  
 Susana Castillo  
 Teri Jo Muzquiz  
**Mojave**  
 Evlyn Puentes  
**Oak Hills**  
 Steve Trudeau  
 Sean Shea  
 Jim Kutch  
 Ron Clabo  
 Mike Stayton  
**Ranchero**  
 Irma Campos  
 James Carter  
**Shadow Ridge**  
 Kelly Ford  
**Sultana**  
 Jeremy Topete  
 Jim Kutch  
 Brett Simmons  
**Topaz**  
 Marcia Rhodes  
 Alysia Van

### "New Books for Newborns"

Mike Apadaca, a teacher at Kingston Elementary, has launched a worthwhile cause.

"Many newborn babies will have a great disadvantage in life. They will not be read to. They will begin school with far less words in their vocabulary (the Word Gap) and will always struggle. I've launched a program through my school (Kingston Elementary) called, New Books for Newborns. We are collecting new baby books to give to new mothers in local hospitals encouraging them to read to their babies. Barnes and Noble has partnered with this effort and is going to give 10% of all sales using the promo code: **11552924** from February 17th-21st, in our Victorville store or on-line ([BN.com](http://BN.com)). We will use the proceeds to buy more books. It feels great to do something that will impact these precious little ones and give them a better chance for a good life."

### Dates to Remember:

**February 6**

**HTA Social** – Marie Callender's

Come and mingle and enjoy an appetizer and non-alcoholic drink on HTA  
3-6 pm

**February 13 & 16**

**No School**

### Benefits

By Jeanne Triska

#### **Sign up for Walkadoo.**

The six week program is from February 27<sup>th</sup> to April 3<sup>rd</sup>. Information for signing up will be sent to your district e-mail.

#### Ways to Stay Healthier

1. Eat a big breakfast. Breakfast is the most important meal of the day
2. Eat snacks. Eat fiber.
3. Try to eat 70% of your total intake by 3 p.m.
4. Do not eat anything after 7 p.m.
5. Have 9 servings of fruits and vegetables daily
6. Drink plenty of water.
7. Exercise. Sneak in minutes when you can. It does not have to be a full hour.
8. Get plenty of sleep.

There are apps for everything:

Loself, MyFitnessPal, MapMyRun, RunKeeper, Pocket Yoga, YogaToday, AllRecipes.com

Taken from training by [www.fitnesscousulting.com](http://www.fitnesscousulting.com)

## **6 Reasons Teachers Unions Are Good for Kids**

By Kristin Rawls August 17, 2012

Once upon a time, labor unions enjoyed a fair amount of political legitimacy among both the public and political elites. While it is true that unions were always a source of concern for capitalist elites and union-busting was always with us, the public generally considered unions mainstream. They had a political voice because regular working- and middle-class people often voted based on their endorsements.

Yet over the last three decades, the power of unions has decreased steadily -- especially as a result of the hostility to business regulation that characterized Reagan-era politics of the 1980s, and the anti-communist Cold War propaganda of the time that made the general public more suspicious than ever of labor activism.

But if unions as a whole have taken a reputational hit over the last 30 years, teachers unions in particular have found themselves especially demonized. From being falsely accused of defending sexual predators in schools, to being held ultimately responsible for the "failure" of America's school system (a fallacy), teachers unions have borne the brunt of anti-union sentiment to the point that less than a quarter of the public now believes that teachers unions have a positive effect on schools, with 41% of those recently polled finding the effect to be neither positive nor negative.

Yet by a number of important measures, there is no doubt that teachers unions continue to play a vital role in the health and well-being of our schools, the teachers who work in them and the children they serve. Though the country's two major teachers unions, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the National Education Association (NEA), have taken well-deserved criticisms from the left for caving on charter schools -- and for uncritically supporting Democratic candidates who push for corporate education reform just as Republicans do -- when it comes to helping build our children's success, the fact is we need teachers unions today as much as we ever have.

### **Here are six reasons teachers unions continue to be good for America's kids:**

#### **1. Teachers unions are the only major educational players still focused on advancing school equity by leveling the playing field.**

For the most part, both Democratic and Republican politicians have dispensed with the rhetoric about achieving true equality in education. Rarely do politicians propose policy measures motivated by concerns about equity -- like school integration based on socioeconomic status or equitable school funding. These kinds of policies would help put schools on equal footing, but today's politicians ignore them in favor of various, ineffectual corporate reforms like school choice and teacher accountability, as well as programs like Teach for America, whose popularity in these corners remains unconnected to actual success.

Increasingly, it seems evident that the adoption of these corporate reforms will not merely fail to address the core inequality issues that plague our education system, but they may actually make them worse. Writing for Truthout, Paul Thomas, associate professor of education at Furman University, explains that a recent New York study suggests that "components of [this] 'no excuses' education reform are likely to increase the current problems with social and educational equity, instead of addressing them." The preface of this study also indicates that, at least in New York City schools, corporate-style reform has led to the growth of "apartheid-like" conditions.

The growth of those conditions, in New York City and beyond, has led teachers unions to stand as perhaps the last, strong advocates for equity in education. The AFT-affiliated Chicago Teachers Union (CTU), for example, has been particularly vocal in its pushback against market-based reforms in Chicago Public Schools (CPS). As its Web site explains, "Students and their families recognize the apartheid-like system managed by [Chicago Public Schools]. It denies resources to

The neediest schools, uses discipline policies with a disproportionate harm on students of color, and enacts policies that increase the concentrations of students in high poverty and racially segregated schools."

CTU has also pushed hard for specific reforms that address inequality, including increasing the number of "school counselors, nurses, social workers, and psychologists... [who] serve Chicago's population of low-income students," as well as bolstering programs that serve bilingual students and students with special needs.

Alongside the advocacy of local union operations like the CTU, the two largest teachers unions, AFT and NEA, also stand as bold proponents of equity in education. Though they have become increasingly friendly to charter schools in recent years, both organizations oppose most corporate reform measures that lead to greater inequality, including under-regulated school choice, which tends to create racially and economically segregated public schools. And in an era in which many in the public arena claim that inequitable funding is not the reason for school "failure," both organizations continue to lead the charge in pressing for more equity in school funding.

For example, a decades-long commitment to equity by the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE-NEA) in collaboration with Civil Rights activists famously led to the establishment of a high-achieving, relatively equitable school system in Wake County, North Carolina. Though the system has been under attack by conservative school choice advocates for the past two years, the NCAE-NEA has taken a leadership role in organizing opposition throughout the state alongside the NC-NAACP. Their efforts were rewarded last year, when a new school board majority endorsed by the NCAE took office and then, in June 2012, promised to restore [the so-called "diversity" school assignment plan, which desegregates schools on the basis of economic inequality to ensure well-funded, high quality schools throughout the large school system.

## **2. Teachers unions fight to protect teachers' First Amendment rights, allowing them to advocate for children and schools without facing retaliation.**

Teachers unions have long fought to prevent political repercussions against members who speak out or disagree with their superiors. The AFT was at the forefront of fighting some school districts' requirements that teachers take an anti-communist loyalty oath in the 1930's, and again in the 1950's. The NEA also protested these oaths in the 1950s.

The unions' early commitment to academic and political freedom helped provide teachers in union-dense areas with freedoms to speak out that they might not have otherwise had. This was, and remains, a very important protection for teachers trying to advocate for their classrooms and individual students. Teacher Alicia Maud Wein of New York State United Teachers told AlterNet that speech protections have been indispensable for her as she advocates on behalf of her students:

"Without job protections, the balance is tipped so heavily in favor of administration (who must prioritize issues like the budget, school reforms, and legislation) that teachers are silenced. I know in my 15-year career I have had to respond in writing, at meetings or by speaking publicly on all of the above issues as a matter of course when advocating for my students and what's best for their learning. Frequently, I have been in the position of airing those concerns to transient or inexperienced administrative staff with whom I had not yet developed a working relationship. I would have been far too wary to do so if I thought it could mean a dismissal from my job without due process, and those students would not have benefited from my experience and support... Teachers living in fear of losing their jobs are not in a position to speak up for their kids, fight for appropriate curricular decisions, special education accommodations, funding, disciplinary actions, etc."

This advocacy can take many forms, whether it involves advocating for individual students who need specific accommodations or working at the structural level with schools and school districts. For example, NEA and AFT get involved when poor schools are missing an adequate supply of books or other course materials. NEA's Priority Schools Campaign helps the organization build networks in poor school districts so that they can proactively help teachers and administrators serve their students. NEA's grievance process allows the organization to follow up and ensure that kids have the books and other supplies they need. AFT's similar procedures also provide teachers with helpful avenues through which they can speak out to make sure students have enough materials. Just last month, AFT affiliates in Michigan and Ohio, organized book drives that provided tens of thousands of new books to the homes of poor families with children. Without speech protections firmly in place, teachers would risk workplace retaliation for speaking out.

### **3. Schools with unionized teachers often produce higher achieving students.**

Citing a well-regarded 2002 study from Arizona State University, former NEA head John Wilson told AlterNet that, "[Research] on this topic indicates higher student achievement in unionized districts. That should make perfect sense if unions are creating work places where teachers are better paid with better working conditions... [It] results in attracting and retaining great teachers as well as having great learning conditions for students. Show me a school district that invests in good education policy and funding developed in collaboration with the teachers, and I will show you a high performing district."

As researcher Robert M. Carini notes in the study's preface, at the time the study was conducted "only 17 prominent studies [had] looked at the relationship between teacher unions and achievement." But he goes on to point out that,

"The 12 studies that reported favorable union effects [were] generally more methodologically sound than those that found harmful effects. Studies that reported favorable effects used more extensive statistical controls and were often conducted at the student level. In contrast, studies reporting harmful effects were conducted at the state or district level, which, due to aggregation, are more prone to error."

According to the ASU research, gains catalogued among students taught by unionized teachers were notable: "Several studies found math, economics and SAT scores in unionized schools improved more than in non-unionized schools. Increases in state unionization led to increases in state SAT, ACT, and NAEP scores and improved graduation rates. One analysis attributed lower SAT and ACT scores in the South to weaker unionization there." The impact of unionism on minority students was also of note, with "minority students [showing] larger high school math gains in unionized schools than those in nonunion schools." And among male students, attending schools with unionized teachers appeared to lower their probability of dropping out of high school.

So all those popular myths about the deleterious effects of unions on learning? Probably time to scrap 'em.

### **4. Teachers unions help teachers get better.**

The conservative spin generally implies that teacher protections like tenure protect bad teachers -- and suggest that this reduces the quality of education. But Wein disputes this claim, noting that unions provide invaluable opportunities for professional development and teacher improvement. They guard against bad teaching most by giving teachers the tools they need to succeed rather than punishing them:

"Teachers must have opportunity to study, to learn, to develop their craft, to read education research, and to collaborate. We need to model ourselves as learners for our students, to know our profession well, and be supported as we address new state mandates and reform... Teaching is already a profession where more than 50 percent leave the profession before the five-year mark,

which equals about 1,000 teachers per day. As inspiring and important as the work is, it can also be very fast-paced and even overwhelming. Students need and deserve well-trained, experienced professionals in the classroom, and that doesn't happen without professional development, for which teacher unions fight tirelessly."

NEA sponsors a variety of both state-specific and nation-wide professional development programs. National programs range from support staff assistance to learning how to be a mentor to training in collective action and bargaining. AFT promotes a holistic, ongoing process of professional development. Its Web site states, "Professional development...should enable teachers to offer students the learning opportunities that will prepare [students] to meet world-class standards in given content areas and to successfully assume adult responsibilities for citizenship and work." Its Educational Research and Development Program (ER&D) was launched in 1981 to bring educators and researchers together to trade information about how to become a better teacher through using research.

## **5. Teachers unions protect student and teacher safety in schools.**

Both the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) require good sanitation practices and cleanliness in American public schools. But sometimes schools fail to meet minimal standards, and in those cases it is often left to the unions to step up and advocate on behalf of teacher and student safety.

Norm Scott, a retired teacher and former building representative with the United Federation of Teachers of New York City told AlterNet that the union "has insisted that each school have a safety plan, and the union has to sign off on the plan. At my former school, the union found that the boiler room had asbestos, and the union jumped in [to fix the problem]. We couldn't necessarily trust that our employer would do it independently. The union is called in for most any health issue." For example, he says it has asked for an investigation into high incidents of cancer among teachers in some New York schools.

Often the unions' safety advocacy takes the form of support for greener schools and better indoor air quality. NEA hosts training for custodial staff that teaches practices that can help improve school air quality. "The goal of this training," according to NEA's Web site, "is to assist NEA state and local affiliates create local association IAQ [Indoor Air Quality] action plans and to provide custodial staff with the tools, tips and resources that will help them improve and maintain a quality indoor environment." This makes schools safer for both students and teachers. AFT, meanwhile, published its own guide to greener, more sustainable schools in 2008, citing research showing "that better environmental quality yields more productive human beings and greater academic achievement for all students." Both organizations also support local and state campaigns for healthier, greener schools.

## **6. Teachers unions oppose school vouchers.**

Both NEA and AFT have always advocated against school vouchers -- that is, tax entitlements diverted from public funds that assist parents with private school tuition, including religious instruction. Vouchers divert money from public school systems already strapped for resources, and both unions have campaigned tirelessly against voucher programs cropping up throughout the United States.

According to AFT, "vouchers don't improve outcomes for kids who receive them or drive voucher programs rely on false advertising to promote their mission: "Although much of the pro-voucher rhetoric uses the word 'choice,' in practice it is the private schools that choose the kids, not the other way around. In areas where voucher programs exist, private school operators decide whether they want taxpayers to subsidize their schools. They also decide how many, if any, voucher students they will admit."

NEA, meanwhile, notes that it "oppose[s] alternatives that divert attention, energy, and resources from efforts to reduce class size, enhance teacher quality, and provide every student with books,

computers, and safe and orderly schools" -- and vouchers are certainly one such "alternative."

Affiliates of both organizations have been important organizers against a far-reaching voucher program introduced this year in Louisiana. NEA affiliates in the state threatened to sue individual schools last month, alleging that vouchers are "an unconstitutional payment of public funds." AFT affiliates, meanwhile, requested a "hearing at which critiques, comments and suggestions for improvements can be made in regard to accountability standards for private and religious schools that will accept vouchers this fall." The organization says accountability measures for these schools in Louisiana are more or less nonexistent, noting that there are very few checks in place to ensure that children receive a high quality private school education.

So, if the health and well being of students and teachers is what matters to you, avoid joining the popular chorus against teachers unions in the United States. Current and future students will benefit from having them in classrooms for a long time to come.

## Get the CTA Members Benefits App!



This application is designed to assist members of the California Teachers Association with accessing and utilizing the Association's Member Benefits programs and services. It has five general components:

- **Featured Benefit:** The App will receive notifications from Member Benefits about special and limited offers, contests, giveaways and other exciting ways to save money or win prizes.
- **Benefits:** Descriptions of the benefits offerings designed by CTA and its partners specifically for educators, including information about how to obtain these benefits, contact the companies and access other resources for more detailed information. Perfect for leaders promoting these programs.
- **Locations:** Find the buildings for endorsed credit unions and CTA offices quickly and easily!
- **Events:** Find steps, advice and relevant contact information for anyone setting up a chapter, UniServ or SCC event at CTA that features Member Benefits.
- **Advocacy:** CTA stands behind its endorsed products, and is ready to assist members who may have any issues. Find the step-by-step process to satisfaction outlined here.

We recommend all CTA members install this App to ensure they are maximizing the benefits of their membership!