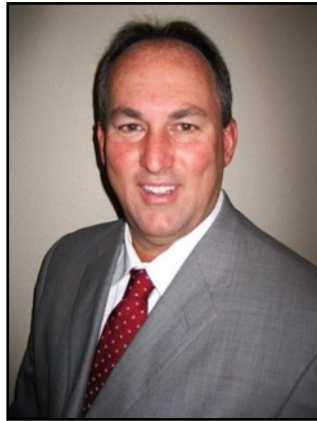


# CSO advocate for all as school trustees

We are obvious partners in advocacy when it comes to representing our members at work through providing the best learning conditions for students, negotiating contracts, and improving working conditions. However, often we overlook the ways in which our partnerships can exponentially gain power through political advocacy.

Over the past few years, we have seen inspiring work by our associations in Burbank, Alameda and Carlsbad in organizing for political action. These CTA Associations partnered with resident



Arleigh Kidd

CSO staff members to amplify teacher voice on their local school boards.

We know that electing strong school board members is key to any local association's core program. But in these three cities, we have seen the positive outcome from making our very own CSO staff members into the candidates.

CSO member Arleigh Kidd had this to say, "as a CTA Organizer and former

School Board Member, I've seen firsthand the impact our locals can have on School Boards. The Burbank Teacher's Association for example, they helped elect Steve Ferguson who then worked with BTA to institute a student mental health program. The District and BTA recognized that the "Whole Child" approach works best to make sure our students achieve to their full potential and that "one-size-fits-all" approaches don't work. Through local political action our members can have a direct impact on our students' lives."

In Alameda CSO member Gray Harris serves on the School Board. "Our Board has priorities in several areas that we would not be able to implement without the help of our local CTA Association. We have a group of teachers and trustees creating new math placement standards across the grades, we are looking at options for building affordable housing for our employees, we are reorganizing our special education services, and we are



Gray Harris

collaborating on creating a budget where we can all agree on the best way to move Alameda teacher pay to at least the mid-range in the county. As a former teacher of ten years, I believe the Board needs to understand the perspective of educators before making decisions that impact the classroom. We are able to accomplish our goals because we work together as an entire district to advocate for public education and the best interests of our students."

"We were able to push back on Audeo II Charter School in our district and rejected their petition locally and at the county level. This would not have happened without CTA member engagement helping to influence our local Board of Education and at the County," offers CSO member Kathy Rallings from the Carlsbad School Board.



Kathy Rallings

By collaborating to protect public education we can achieve results that would not otherwise be possible.

# Concealed carry — coming to your school?

After Sandy Hook, the idea of allowing teachers to carry guns in the classroom began to gain traction in different parts of the country. Some wondered if having armed police officers at some school sites along with metal detectors wasn't enough.

In California, primary contact staff and association members are having to tackle this issue due to some school boards implementing board policies allowing concealed carry on school campuses.

Bruce Saathoff, PCS out of the Bak-

ersfield RRC, and Josh Kob, PCS from the Fresno RRC, work with local chapters whose school districts have adopted policies supporting teachers carrying firearms. For local chapters and the CSO who represent them, carrying firearms changes the working conditions, which means it is subject to negotiations. Some school districts are more willing than others to negotiate in good faith, but others, such as Fresno, are known for their contentious relationships with their local associations.

Carrying a concealed gun also pre-

sents another challenge for both members and PCS. In some parts of the state, it is simply culturally acceptable to carry guns. Thus, while some members may take issue with allowing the teacher in the next classroom to have concealed weapon on school campuses, other members may see it as vital to protecting the students they are charged with teaching.

What are your thoughts? Your local chapter may soon need to take a position on unit members carrying at work.

# Advocacy Appeal

Spring 2017

## INSIDE

- Stand Up .....2
- Carrying at school...4
- CSO Trustees .....4



A CSO publication

# TAKEBACKS: Management proposes list of reductions for CSO



The CSO Bargaining Team poses with cards of support from members on March 8. They are, from left, Sue Midori-Jones, Jane Robb, Frank Wells, Penny Sevoian, Norma Ortiz, and Chair Rosemary Louissaint.

### "Takebacks"

Experienced bargainers know what they are – usually something you worked hard to get into your contract, something that matters to you and your members, yet the employer demands to take that thing out of your contract.

And yet takebacks are exactly what CTA Management put on the table when they met with the CSO Bargaining Committee March 6 and 8. CTA proposed to:

- Make taking Association release time harder.
- Deny long-term employees any more than 20 sick days to extend their date of retirement (there is no known limit

for retiring managers, who have been known to use months between their last day of work and their actual retirement).

- Reduce retirement benefits by basing them on the highest full year of salary rather than the highest month.
- Make it harder for staff to get compensatory time for working long hours – even during crises.
- Eliminate the extra time credit staff receive for working on Sundays and Holidays.
- Gain the power to suspend staff without pay pending the final outcome (See Takebacks, Page 3)

— **Partners in Advocacy** —  
**CTA staff and members working for California's students**

## CSO and teachers “Stand Up For Students” around state

The Bay Area may be one of the most developed places on Earth, yet there is still an undiscovered frontier in California.

Real justice in education for all students as yet to be discovered here, yet some CSO staff are working hard to help Region 1 CTA members and residents decide what it looks like and, ultimately, find it.

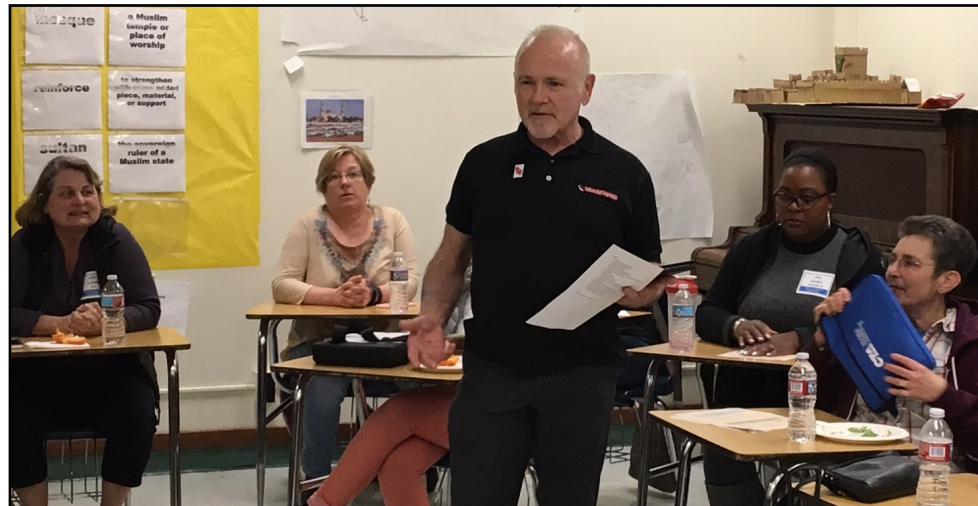
About 40 CTA members and CSO staff met at Westlake Middle School in Oakland Feb. 27 to become Partners in Advocacy in the form of a movement they call “Stand Up For All Students.”

CSO staff Katherine Clarke, Dawn Cova, Larry Spotts, Kathlene Beebe and Becky Flanigan developed and are leading the plan to put the people at the forefront to educational decision-making.

They prepared a grant application and a plan to empower CTA members to protect their students’ rights.

And CTA members and the community are rising to the challenge.

“Members came to discuss their ideas for ensuring quality public education for all students and they worked together to develop strategies to help meet their goal,” said Katherine Clarke, Primary Contact Staff in the Salinas Regional Resource Center. She said that many of the CTA member activists at the meeting have been working for years for educational justice, they simply



CSO Member Larry Spotts speaks to members in Oakland.

needed a forum to come together and the coaching required to develop a well-organized “plan to win.”

Their goal is lofty: To Create a Movement to Build a Stronger Union to strengthen Free, Safe, and Quality Public Education for all Students based on Social, Economic and Political Justice. One of the first steps is reaching out to other organizations to build effective alliances in the community.

“Our attitude is “Si Se Puede,”” said Larry Spotts, PCS at the Concord RRC. “Our job as organizers is to empower our members to make change based on their values and priorities. It’s fabulous working with like-minded colleagues who want the same thing, because it made for a fantastic kickoff.”

Another next step are two forums for educators to learn about their rights and how to protect their immigrant students.

In southern California, CSO staff Helen Farias and Lian Shoemake, CSO Retired staff Steve Pulkinnen, and Region 4 Organizer David Partida are working on a project in South County Teachers United.

South County Teachers United Social Justice Corps, also funded by a CTA Community Engagement Grant, kicked off this past Martin Luther King Holiday. That event brought together about 200 teachers and community partner organizations, ranging from immigrant rights groups to those supporting

(See Stand Up, Page 3)

## Stand Up: Members find inspiration supporting students

(Continued from page 2)  
 LGBTQ+ students.

“Several teachers have since partnered with these groups to host workshops on their campuses,” Farias said. “We are currently planning another forum focusing exclusively on immigrant rights, as well as developing an action plan for the May 1 Day of Action.”

Farias, in her first year as CSO staff at the South County UniServ, is leading the project. The goal is to engage members and to increase capacity and parent support, to increase the capacity of the union and involve members who are not typically involved in other union functions.

“There are a lot of new teachers who are passionate about improving public schools, but there is no vacancy for them



Lian Shoemake, Helen Farias and Ed Sibby organize in South County.

to get involved in their union,” Partida said. “This is a place for them to get involved.”

There is also some excitement in Orange County – last year they formed a countywide PAC to run a countywide

campaign for two County Office of Education Board members. They won one, and they lost one.

“That was ground-breaking and that progressed into what we are doing right now,” Partida said. He said the Orange County Service Center’s Organizing Committee has launched a promising organizing project. The goal is to identify new leaders. Partida conducted a training with about 40 organizing team members from several chapters who role-played one-on-one dialogues

and built local plans for organizing. “They have never been connected in this way,” Partida said. “They usually focus on their chapter’s issues and have not worked together. It’s a new opportunity with potential.”

## Takebacks: Comp time changes could change support culture

(Continued from Page 1)  
 of grievances.

“Like any corporation, CTA Management is looking for ways to squeeze more work out of people for less money,” said Rosemary Louissaint, chair of the CSO Bargaining Team. “It’s not a surprise – we expect these types of demands at the start of bargaining. Still, it shows a lack of appreciation for the work we do.”

For example, CSO staff have a culture of helping each other out in times of crisis. Staff people do their own work, and then help their colleagues by doing site visits, helping at trainings all over the state, and even organizing picket lines.

The CTA Management proposal would let staff take compensation time only when they have to work additional days, not simply long days. Imagine what that might mean during campaign season, when staff are asked to work

long days canvassing and phone-banking and still work at bargaining tables and all of the other things staff do? The CTA proposal would discourage staff from

**“This is the type of thing CSO staff see every day when we bargain with our school districts.”**

working long days, when long days are sometimes what’s needed.


“This is the type of thing CSO staff see every day when we bargain with our school districts,” Louissaint said. “We need to help them understand the negative consequences of the proposals they put on the table.”

“Our experienced bargaining team

understands the demands of our work, and the protections we need in a contract,” said CSO President Chuck King. “As bargaining progresses, I know that they will defend the great work that we all do every day, and fight to maintain the rights that we have won in past bargaining battles.”

“Let’s show our support early and often, so that we can settle this contract in a fair manner, without ‘settling’ for less,” King said.

“In times, such as these, I would have management and governance look to staff as the group of professionals who equally have the best interest of the sustainability of this organization in mind,” said CSO Vice President Kenya Spearman. “Bolstering staff to confront the ongoing and growing onslaught of attacks from the far right is tantamount to a win. Asking for takebacks is disrespectful of what we do and have done on behalf of CTA members.”

 **Advocacy Appeal is produced by the California Staff Organization, the union for professional departmental and Regional UniServ Staff who work for the 320,000 members of the California Teachers Association. Comments or inquiries may be emailed to [csocomcom@gmail.com](mailto:csocomcom@gmail.com). Find us online at [www.calstaff.org](http://www.calstaff.org).**