



BTA BENCHMARK



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President's Message by Diana Abasta

BACK TO WORK FOR BTA COMMITTEES

Members may be unaware of the fact that BTA has several committees that help do the work for our union. The committees meet during Rep. Council and, when needed, meet at the BTA office to plan activities. Member participation in committees strengthens our solidarity and helps distribute the workload on our elected officers. I would encourage you to see if there is one committee that is of interest to you. You do not have to be a Site Rep. to be on a committee. For example, if you are interested in doing a PD for a grade level or subject, we have our Wine and Wisdom series that is looking for some presenters. If school board elections or other political elections are of interest to you, you may want to sit on the political action committee. Feel free to contact us to see when the next meeting is. Contributing your professional expertise strengthens our organization and is so appreciated.



In unity,
Diana

Communications

This committee will work on a plan on how to best disseminate information regarding upcoming events/actions to our members. This may include creating flyers, posting to BTA website, emailing, texting reminders, or contributing an article for the Benchmark by finding information of interest at our different sites. We need a systematic way to get information out on BTA Facebook page and Instagram. This committee may interface with other committees if publicity is needed.

Community Outreach

Work with community organizations such as PTSA, BTAC, UME Credit Union, firefighter's union, police union, YMCA, Family Services Agency, Burbank Human Rights Council, American Cancer Society, Alzheimer's Association, and PFLAG. Some possibilities would be coordinating events with these organizations. For example, we have a table in August for the BPD National Community Night Out. We have helped Ume with the "Thank a Soldier" event in October. We have participated in the Alzheimer's walk in November, Care Walk in April, and Relay for Life in May. We also want to find ways to interact with our small business community through our Business Buddies campaign.

Justice and Equity Team (JET)

Create a space for BTA members to reflect on their practices, access resources, confront systemic racism and oppression in the education system, advocate for social justice and equity at our school sites, and work to make sustainable change throughout our district. JET holds monthly meetings and plans to organize semester events. JET operates with the knowledge that LGBTQIA+ rights, women's rights, and BIPOC rights are human rights.

Membership/Social

Utilize strategies to connect with, engage, and retain members. May connect with organizing to put on events to publicize benefits of membership. Plan events that will focus on member engagement. Plan and coordinate benefits and STRS workshops. We can book these through Nate Banditelli, CTA GBU Director. Plan and organize events to engage our members. Research venues and materials to hold these events. You are responsible for making sure events are publicized in the Benchmark.

Organizing/Political Action

Plan activities and/or events around specific issues such as bargaining, elections, political campaigns, member attendance at BOE meetings. Create talking points. Come up with a

protocol to put in place so that any event that rolls out is effective and efficient. You will need to interface with negotiations and membership at times. Handle elections if needed. We utilize Simply Voting through the BTA office. If there are elections, do the paperwork connected to elections and PAC activities.

Professional Development

Plan workshops led by our teachers after school held at the BTA office or at sites. Come up with a needs assessment survey to put out so we can ask members what they need. Work with District PD TOSAs when possible. Set the dates and place. Encourage colleagues to share their effective practices with others in the same grade level or content areas. Plan Read Across America event in March and any activity that will help build our profession.

My Why...



LUTHER BURBANK
MIDDLE SCHOOL



"My 7th grade social studies teacher and Spanish teacher in high school both had lasting impacts on my life. I am still in contact with both of them to this day. Therefore, I teach because I know that I too can have a positive impact on the lives of others. The thing that drives me is not the content I cover, but the relationships and skills I can help students foster while they are learning with me.

In my class we focus a lot on communication, building relationships and working together to learn and grow. When I see students gain confidence, help others and make real life connections to what we are learning it puts a smile on my face and lets me know I am on the right track.

In a community like Burbank we are lucky to be able to keep up with our students lives after they have left our classrooms. It motivates me when students reach out to share that something they learned or a project they completed in my classroom has stayed with them through the years.

I have also reached out to my colleagues about their why and here is what they had to say!"

Stefanie Enokian, 7th Grade Social Science and BTA Secretary

"To work with amazing colleagues who are creative, caring and full of energy!"

Lisa Raluy,
Culinary Arts

"I get to help people figure out who they are and that is awesome!"

Lucas Gattuso,
Advanced Digital Media

"I like working with the learners, making connections, and helping them learn and grow. Sometimes it gets tough and stressful, but there are always those learners who let you know they appreciate you and who you know you've helped grow. Those small moments are what make teaching worth it."

Debora Zecena Rubio, Art

CTA STATE COUNCIL IS DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

From Friday, October 22 to Sunday, October 24, the CTA's top policy-making body - the CTA State Council -- convened virtually to continue to fight for educators, for

schools, and for our students. Over the three -day event, nearly 800 delegates from local unions across the state met to discuss policy, consider pending legislation, and vet candidates in upcoming elections. In addition to engaging with these important matters, the work done at State Council is also a time to re-forged those bonds between members of various locals – and to commit to finding those issues that will bring us together in common cause.

For many delegates, the work began long in advance. One of the most important aspects of State Council is the ability of delegates to bring motions to the floor to be discussed, debated and voted on. These “New Business Items” (or “NBIs”) can take weeks to draft – not to mention the time it takes to cobble together enough supporters to speak to the motion and win approval from the entire state council. In order to be as fully informed as possible, the various caucuses met on Friday to review the pending NBIs and make recommendations to their members.

On Saturday, at 10am, the General Session began. It was at this time that we heard from Toby Boyd, our CTA president, David Goldberg, our VP, and Leslie Littman, our Secretary/Treasurer. This year, we also had presentations on the Cesar Chavez and Delores Huerta awards, the LGBTQ+ Safety in School Grant, the Human Rights Awards, and a presentation on Breast Cancer Awareness.

At noon, we broke for lunch and met with our assigned committees. It is in the committee meetings that much of the hard work gets done. There are 23 committees that range in scope from civil rights in education, to retirement, to financing public education, to political action and everything in between. Many times, NBIs are assigned directly to a committee to be researched and for a recommendation on action to be taken by the full membership.

On day two, we met for our second general session and the committee chairs reported out on the previous day’s activities. We then moved on to one of the most important activities: the thirteen New Business Items that had been submitted by delegates. This year, due to meeting virtually, the decision was made to assign all NBIs to committees and to only debate those items requested by the delegates. Out of all the NBIs, the only one to be brought to the floor was a motion to call on California state legislators to oppose mandatory vaccinations for teachers. The motion was debated and overwhelmingly defeated by the delegates.

State Council completed its business in the early afternoon on Sunday with the delegates ready to return to their local unions and continue our ongoing fight for first-rate schools and for the right of every child to a quality education. In the end, the CTA State Council provides a wonderful window into the immense reach and strength of our labor union – and all the amazing educators that are dedicated to protecting teachers throughout the great state of California.



HEALTHY & ADAPTIVE COPING

November 15, 2021 6:00pm -7:00pm

Healthy and adaptive coping looks to offer helpers positive skills to manage moral injury, emotional exhaustion, and re-energizes helpers to aid them in loving their work again.

Many Americans are engaging in negative coping in their day to day lives without even realizing they are doing so. Come learn more about ways to add adaptive and healthy coping skills to your life skills toolbox.

This training is hosted by the CTA IPD department and will feature guest speaker, Ashley Ingram Hutchinson.

[REGISTER](#)

BTA HAPPENINGS

**NAF MEDICAL ACADEMY AT
BHS TEACHES REAL-WORLD
JOB SKILLS**

by Arin Movsessian



Students often ask if they'll ever need to know *this* in the future. Teachers strive to answer that question and make their classes relevant for students. As a teacher of NAF Medical Academy at Burbank High School, relevance is the name of the game. *Be Future Ready* is displayed prominently on the NAF flag and getting students to be ready for the future is what I do.

I enjoy teaching future medical professionals important information about their chosen field, but what I enjoy more is giving them job skills that will be useful in any field. From creating professional resumes, dressing appropriately for a job interview, and experiencing what an actual job

interview feels like - my students are building the foundation for a successful career. Based on many conversations I have had with former students, medical jargon is not what they remember. It's the life skills they learned and the relationships they built that sticks with them for years to come. Every day is a great day to learn and, in my classes, every day is a great day to learn a skill that will last you the rest of your life.

IN-PERSON CHOIR PROGRAM IS BACK AT BURROUGHS

by **Brendan Jennings, Vocal Music Teacher**

Music courses are making a comeback. After fifteen months of struggling to help students learn music skills through a computer, this teacher is relieved to be back in the classroom. Turns out masked singing is far better than singing ON MUTE in a zoom. While it was an interesting experiment at times, the distance learning version of choir was just that...cold and distant. I can feel the joy returning to the artform and confidence of my students as this year has brought us back together, albeit with hoops to jump through and restrictions to follow.

The choir program at Burroughs HS has been strong for a LONG time. This year will be our 43rd annual Pop Show and the students and parents work very hard in all aspects of what we do. That hard work has paid off in successful performances, competitions, and tours. The magic of a live audience cannot be replaced by a streaming show, even with a real time chat...we tried. From May 2020 to May 2021 we produced over 50 hours of streaming content challenging students to learn an array of new technologies that will certainly benefit them in the years to come. None of it, however, holds a candle to the feeling of singing together in person.

So here we are ten weeks into a new school year. We've lost much, yet we are all the more grateful for what we have. It feels so good to be back.

John Burroughs High School
Choir



Walk to End Alzheimer's

On November 6, BTA participated in its third annual Walk to End Alzheimer's. BTA members Heather Good and Stacey Bowren have participated in more walks and have raised thousands of dollars over the years. These two members have inspired us to keep walking until there is a cure.

Due to COVID, our participation in the past years has been small but mighty. This year Diana Abasta, Sarah Schwartz and her daughter Maya, Amy Fuhr and her daughters Brooke and Charlotte, and Stacey Bowren met at 7:00 a.m.

Along with teams and walkers from the Greater Los Angeles area, they walked the L.A. Zoo for a special pre-hours visit.

The energy and excitement of the crowd could be felt while navigating the route and seeing the animals early in the morning was definitely a unique experience. There is nothing like the loud howling of gibbons to keep you motivated!

The BTA team has raised about \$4800 towards its \$6000 goal. If you would still like to donate towards Alzheimer's research, you can click here [BTA Team Donation Page](#).

VISITING THE HOME OF THE JEFFERSON PATRIOTS

by *Diana Abasta*

Jefferson Elementary is the second largest school after Miller. Last Wednesday, Oct. 27, Nate Banditelli, our Executive Director, and I had the pleasure of visiting the site. We started our visit by having a chat with the new principal Ron Young. He seems to be adjusting to the busy pace of the site. It was encouraging to hear that he is impressed by the staff and fully believes in empowering them in the decisions they make regarding their classes.



Observing Tracy Sorensen's second grade math lesson was a delight. I was impressed by the students being able to employ critical thinking skills to recognize patterns in subtraction. Tracy has done some excellent work with these young people.

Nate and I also observed a fourth grade RTI lesson given by Kim Anderson, curriculum specialist. Kim took the 5 students through a reading lesson on the Amazon Rainforest. As an English teacher, I could appreciate how the students needed some help in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and reading fluency. It was impressive to see the progress made, and I enjoyed learning about the 4 layers of the forest and the animals that live in the emergent layer, canopy, understory, and the forest floor. See if you can match the animals to their habitat: macaw, panther, anaconda, and Spider monkeys.

After visiting the site, Nate said "I was really inspired by the diversity of the students at the school. They'll grow up and know that families from different cultures who support each other make the community stronger." After meeting with several educators in the staff lounge, he said "they're facing a lot of challenges here, but it's great to see that they have strong site-based BTA leadership who can support them and advocate for the best version of Jefferson possible."



New Educator Weekend - Home Edition!

Dec 10-12, 2021

CTA's **New Educator Weekend (NEW)** is a conference for new CTA members. This **NEW** conference will be hosted virtually and will have a special focus for educators in their first few years of teaching but offers professional development and instruction that is useful for all educators. The conference has everything that educators need to be successful, including sessions about classroom management, creating engaging

classrooms, lesson plans and ideas, connecting with your union, student loan forgiveness information, member benefits, project grants and more.

We will be covering topics that fall into four focused areas:

- Classroom Management/Student Engagement
- Subject & Grade Level Content Pedagogy
- Professional Engagement/Development
- Unionism/Understanding and Navigating the Union World

Your experience at the New Educator Weekend is equal parts educational and transformational. You'll learn new skills and find solutions to real-life challenges. You'll leave the conference feeling inspired, motivated and with a knowledge of what you need to do to be even more successful on Monday morning in your classroom.

General Session with Keynote Presentation from Rebecca Mieliwocki, 2012 National Teacher of the Year

[Register Now!](#)



SECOND CHANCE OPPORTUNITY ENDS NOVEMBER 30th.

One-time Second Chance Enrollment Opportunity for Chapter Members

Eligible chapter members have a limited-time enrollment opportunity with no health questions asked and guaranteed enrollment for CTA-endorsed Disability insurance and \$50,000 of CTA-endorsed Life insurance from The Standard. You may have missed our chapter's previous special enrollment opportunity, so The Standard is giving us this second chance.

Enrollment ends November 30, 2021. For full details and eligibility requirements, visit standard.com/cta/secondchance.

“Generation Debt: Student Loan Forgiveness”

Did you know the average student loan borrower owes over \$38,000? During “Generation Debt: Student Loan Forgiveness” attendees will learn about the three loan forgiveness programs from the U.S. Department of Education, the requirements for each, pitfalls to be cautious of, and the “NEA Student Debt Navigator” powered by Savi, which is a tool to help association members analyze their personal student loans. Come learn about how you can manage your student loan debt and take advantage of other NEA Member Benefits. [Generation Debt Workshops](#)

Burbank Teachers Association

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