AMERICAN NEEDS TO REVITALIZE LABOR UNIONS

As the pandemic has waned and Americans have returned to the job market there has been a surge of interest in unionizing, resulting in strikes at Amazon, Starbucks and many other employers who have been hostile to labor unions. Recently, employees at an Amazon facility in Staten Island, New York successfully organized a majority vote of workers to approve a union there. In each case, workers have cited a need for employers to recognize their value as essential workers and provide a living wage along with health care and childcare benefits. This surge has occurred as returning workers have begun to reevaluate their life priorities and demand that they share in the unprecedented profits being reaped by large American corporations.

Just as with the post-war period of 1945-46, American workers have gained new leverage as the economy roars back to life due to pent up demand from the pandemic. But as with the post war era, workers are demanding to share in the corporate wealth being created by a surging economy. The wealth gap has never been more extreme between middle class wage earners and the 1% of extremely wealthy individuals in this country. According to the Pew Research Center, the top 1% earners make twenty times more income than the bottom 90%. In looking at wealth ownership, the top 1% own $43.27 trillion and the bottom 90-99% group own $50.53 trillion, even though the bottom 90% is nine times larger than the 1% group. In the U.S., 747 billionaires own two-thirds more than the bottom 50% of households and the gap continues to widen. The top 1% had their income soar 160% since 1979, which coincides almost exactly with the long 40-year decline in labor unions and the decreasing wealth of the American middle class.

This was not the case in the post war years from 1946 through the early 70's. During this time, the growth and power of labor unions was the engine of prosperity for middle class families. By the end of those four decades, middle class families owned a greater share of the total wealth of America than at any other time in our history. But then a combination of corporate consolidations, favorable tax incentives for wealthy investors, hostility to labor unions by President Reagan, and growth of global competition and cheap labor lead to a steady decline in union membership and power. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, today just over 10% of employees are in a union compared to 20% in 1983. Nearly all of that decline has been in the private sector while membership among government workers has stayed fairly consistent. Since the 1970's about one third of government workers, including public school teachers, belong to a union.

In California we are fortunate to have a strong teachers union in the California Teachers Association. Founded in 1863, CTA persuaded the state legislature to establish free public schools for all children. There have been many victories since then, from preventing the firing of a teacher because she was married, to sponsoring and campaigning for Proposition 98, the landmark constitutional amendment that guarantees a certain amount of the state's budget for K-14 schools. Today, with 310,000 members, CTA continues to raise the stature and salaries of educators and has expanded the opportunity for California's students to receive a quality education.

BTA is proud of its affiliation with CTA and NEA as we continue to bargain with BUSD for competitive salaries and improved working conditions for all our members. Together we use our voices at school board meetings and at the bargaining table, and we realize that we're strong because of the unity, collaboration, and incredible dedication of our members, both in the classroom and in organizing activities. We urge you to spread the word and keep up the good work. Collectively, we got each other's back.
Michelle Dixon is a high school RSP teacher at JBHS and has been an active member of the Burbank Teachers Association for 23 years. Over the years, Michelle has been a BTA Rep and is now currently the At Large Director of Special Ed. Michelle is the go-to person for all grade levels of SPED. She has sat on many committees and advocated and fought for change. Michelle’s efforts came to fruition when she helped BTA write its first SPED article this year that will go into our contract. Michelle is also a member who is willing to lend a hand especially when we have had to phone bank and campaign for various measures. She is also the sharpest dresser who does not hesitate to celebrate holidays by dressing to match. She dons bats for Halloween and hearts for Valentine’s Day. BTA is honored to recognize our union sister, Michelle Dixon.
BTA PRESENTS
WINE AND WISDOM

Meditation and Creation Origami presented by local Japanese Origami artist Shigeko.

Experience some social-emotional learning and take away peace and art.

Thursday, April 21st 3:45-4:45pm
BTA Office 3021 W. Burbank Blvd.

RSVP: by April 18th 20 person limit
818.846.1304 or aliceholmes@burbankteachers.org

Shigeko Hanada is a BUSD SPED aide who also teaches origami to K-5th students at McKinley.

Raising Denver in the Classroom

Being a 3rd grade teacher at Edison for 4 years has been an exceptional experience for me. This past year has been one of my favorite experiences because I was able to share my classroom with my guide dog in training, Denver! I received Denver at 6 weeks old and had the privilege of working with him for 19 months before he returned to Guide Dogs of America this past January and began his formal training as a Service Dog.

Denver not only impacted my life in ways that were astonishing and remarkable but the effect he had in my classroom was insurmountable. Students had the opportunity to love, trust, work with, and learn from Denver. My perception of raising a puppy to help expose Denver to opportunities was two-fold when I quickly realized the impact he had on not only my students but the entire population at Edison. He was teaching us while we were teaching him. Denver’s keen sense of care was evident as he helped students transition from home back to the classroom. His piercing brown eyes and head tilt earned him pets and love from students as they released stress, frustration, and unease. Students would lay on the floor and read to Denver; complete work they thought was too hard or overwhelming for them while Denver nested next to them. Denver would lay his head on student’s feet that were stressed or needed to calm down. Most of all, students knew they had someone that loved them each day, regardless of any situation happening at that moment.

The impact of Denver being in my classroom was tremendous and an unforgettable experience for everyone. My classroom recently learned about Pop Art and created some of postcards of Denver. Our connection to him and the impact he made on all of us will be lifelong.

-Jennifer Flores
On April 9th, Shake Balian (JBHS) was awarded the Zaruhy "Sara" Chitjian Armenian Heritage Award at the ANCA-WR Genocide Education Awards Ceremony for her outstanding work teaching and preserving Armenian culture.

Shake, a mathematics teacher, founded the Armenian Club at JBHS which welcomes students of Armenian and non Armenian descent to learn about the rich Armenian culture as well as the Armenian genocide. The club also encourage students to get involved in social justice advocacy.

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**READ HERE, THERE, & EVERYWHERE!**

Throughout the months of March and April, BTA has been promoting reading through our Read Here, There, and Everywhere campaign. Currently, we have had guest readers read at Edison, Washington, Roosevelt and Stevenson. With more dates scheduled this month at McKinley and Providencia.

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**ROOSEVELT**

Dr. Sarah Niemann read *The Impatient Butterfly* by Diana Hutts Aston and illustrated by Sylvia Long at Roosevelt to Rhonda Wright's second graders, and Sarah Larson's students joined us a little later. Dr. Niemann and I also were able to see Ms. Myers’ class do some close reading and annotating of Sue, Tyrannosaurus Rex. Rhonda's class has caterpillars that will eventually become Painted Lady butterflies. To end the day, Mr. Osmond, the principal, gave us a tour of the garden which hopefully will attract more butterflies.

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**STEVENSON**

At Stevenson, Sandi Sutter's class had Dr. John Paramo read *May your Life Be Deliciosa* by Michael Genhart and illustrated by Loris Lora. It was wonderful to see Dr. Paramo read and talk about his own family background. He mentioned making tamales with grandmother or nana, as he called her. The students also shared their terms of endearment for their grandparents. It was a perfect morning for reading and walking.
RSVP HERE so there is plenty of food and drink for everyone

JOIN US FOR OUR FINAL

BTA TGIF

of the 2021-2022 school year

Where: BTA Office
3021 W Burbank Blvd,
Burbank, CA 91505

May 13th @
3:30-7:00pm

Food by Sandoval's Tacos!
Margarita machine!
Soda and beer available as well!

RSVP HERE so there is plenty of food and drink for everyone

State Council Report

March 25-27, the State Council of the California Teachers Association (CTA) met in person for the first time since January 2020. It was a time of reconnection for friends and colleagues who have not seen each other in person for over two years.

CTA President Toby Boyd started the meeting with a reflection of what we as educators have experienced during the pandemic. During his report he went on to say that the increase of school funding received in the previous, current and future years has allowed locals over the state to achieve victories at the bargaining table regarding salary increases and benefits.

The California Teacher of the Year and the runner-ups were honored during the Saturday General Session.

There was a celebration of Women's History Month and a celebration of Cesar Chavez Day (March 31) and Dolores Huerta day (April 10). Dolores Huerta was a teacher who became a labor activist. Happy 92nd birthday, Ms. Huerta!

CTA Executive Director Joe Boyd discussed the dangers we as public educators face in this current political environment. These include school-
choice voucher initiatives and bills that will allow parents to critique our lesson plans, sue us (the educator) for making their children uncomfortable, and determine the content of our curriculum, our assignments and our assessments. He also discussed the victories some locals were having, including a 10% raise on schedule over two years, and a 15% raise on schedule over three years.

The council was strongly encouraged to vote in June for Tony Thurmond’s reelection for State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Since this is a non-partisan race, if he receives a majority (50%+1) he will not have to face election in November. For Registered Democratic voters, it is also recommended they vote for Ricardo Lara for Insurance Commissioner and Rob Bonta for Attorney General. All three of these men have been strong advocates for public education in California.

On Saturday afternoon, CTA hosted the first ever forum on fossil fuel stocks in our retirement portfolio. The event was the result of almost two years of hard work by the CTA-Divest team. There was a vigorous debate between the pro-divestment and pro-engagement teams with an opportunity for those in attendance to ask questions.

In other actions:

Council delegates were also reminded that CSU has dropped SAT/ACT requirements for admissions.

For the 2022-2023 school year CTA’s dues will be $768.

The CTA Pocket Calendar will no longer be published. One may download the calendar into their personal electronic calendar.

**FORMS DUE APRIL 14th**

Nominations are now open for the following offices to the 2022 - 2023 BTA Board of Directors.

**VICE-PRESIDENT**: 2-year term  
**TREASURER**: 2-year term  
**HIGH SCHOOL DIRECTOR (BHS)**: 2-year term  
**MIDDLE SCHOOL DIRECTOR**: 2-year term  
**ELEMENTARY DIRECTOR**: 2-year term  
(Elementary Director seat eligible candidate must be only from one of these schools: Bret Harte, Disney, Edison, Providencia, Roosevelt, Washington)

Any active member’s name, upon request, shall be placed on the ballot for an office of the Association. Any active member may be nominated by any other member, with the consent of the nominee.

**DEADLINE FOR FILING DECLARATION FORM**: Thursday, April 14, 2022 5:00 p.m.  
BTA Office 3021 W Burbank Blvd. Burbank  
91505

**DECLARATION OF CANDIDACY FOR 2022-2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
CALSTRS
HOW WILL YOU SPEND YOUR FUTURE?

My Retirement System

APRIL 18, 4:30 - 6:00 P.M.

This online workshop provides an overview of the CalSTRS hybrid retirement system, your survivor and disability benefits, how your benefit will be calculated, ways you can increase your benefit and other CalSTRS resources available to you. Learn more about this first step in your life journey with CalSTRS.

Here is the link to join this special seminar on April 18. No need to RSVP.

Burbank Teachers Association

3021 W. Burbank Blvd.
Burbank, CA 91505

Unsubscribe