

# SBUUT ANNOUNCER

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## California: Continues to Support Public Education Though Challenges Remain

On November 8, 2016 Californians passed Proposition 55 which continues the crucial funding stream for California public schools, while allowing the 2012 sales tax increase to sunset. Four years ago California voters approved Proposition 30 which ushered in a new funding mechanism—the Local Control Funding Formula or LCFF which in turn required the Local Control Accountability Plan (LCAP)—a detailed plan for how each school district will spend its State awarded money. Under LCFF students with the greatest needs—English learners; students receiving free and reduced lunch; students in the foster care system—are receiving more dedicated dollars and support than in the past. All students are benefitting since more funds are actually coming to the schools instead of IOUs.

The new formula has provided reliable, real revenue for schools allowing the State to pay back money that was borrowed from districts during the Schwarzenegger era. The advocacy of your local union and CTA helped make it possible to restore programs, restore instructional and professional development days and halt the wholesale layoffs that had been plaguing our schools for a number of years. With the passage of Proposition 55, which will be in effect for 12 years, there is a more stable foundation on which to build.

Certainly California still underfunds its schools. As it is, we are still 46<sup>th</sup> in school funding in the Nation. In a state whose economy ranks in the top 6 in the world, it's hard to understand why that is still the case. We are also facing a critical teacher shortage. We need more bright energetic people to enter the field of education.

While California voters have been supportive of public education and candidates who have vowed to protect it, on the national front, there is much to be concerned about. The United States Department of Education is facing changes that threaten public education's very existence. With renewed conversations about school vouchers and even talk about downsizing or eliminating the department altogether, a free quality education for all students could be in jeopardy.

In addition to Federal funding concerns, as public educators, you are always concerned about students' well-being. Students who are fearful, hungry, or sick are not going to be focusing on learning. With the prospect of families being divided through immigration reform, possibly losing healthcare and the possible repeal of equity laws, many students have fears that affect their ability to focus on school—making your job more difficult.

What affects students ultimately affects their teachers and those that nurture and support them.

Your local union, CTA and NEA have student advocacy as a core value. Public school teacher unions were early advocates for child labor laws and desegregating schools. So much of what helps students to achieve has been implemented because there were teachers willing to put themselves out there so that young people would have a better quality of education and more opportunities to lead a better life. You are a member of South Bay United Teachers whose mission statement embraces the idea of uniting to advance education, human dignity and civil rights for all children through quality public schools. Locally and statewide, we are committed to this cause.

Let your U.S. Senators know that you expect the Secretary of Education to support public education and will fight to obtain better funding for it. <http://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/> and <https://www.harris.senate.gov/public/> Stay tuned for opportunities to engage in actions that will advance this work.

You may also call (855)971-2474 and put in your zip code to be connected to your representative.

# Students Have the Right to a **SAFE SCHOOL**

## *National Education Association*

Numerous laws provide that students have the right to be free from discrimination or harassment based on their actual or perceived race, national origin, gender (including gender identity and sexual orientation), religion, or disability.

The U.S. Constitution, as well as Title IV and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, and religion; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination; the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. And numerous state and local laws provide similar protections.

The law requires schools to take steps to ensure that students have a safe school environment. Schools fail to meet this legal obligation when students are subject to chants, graffiti, taunts, threats, assaults, intimidation, and epithets based on their actual or perceived race, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. Anyone, including educators, can and should report harassing conduct to a school or other governmental officials.

When a school receives a complaint they must investigate and resolve the situation by:

- ◆ Immediately initiating a thorough and impartial investigation.
- ◆ Interviewing targeted students, offending individuals, and witnesses, and maintaining written documentation of investigation.
- ◆ Communicating with targeted students regarding steps taken to end harassment and following up with those students to ensure that the harassment has ceased. When an investigation reveals that harassment has occurred, a school must take steps reasonably calculated to:

- \*End the harassment,
- \*Eliminate any hostile environment,
- \*Prevent harassment from recurring, and
- \*Prevent retaliation against the targeted student or anyone who complained. The appropriate remedy for harassment will depend on the situation.

◆ Resolutions often include:

- \* Training on identifying and addressing harassment.
- \* Providing additional supervision in areas where harassment occurs.
- \* Determining consequences and particular training needed for harassers, including whether discipline is appropriate.
- \* Limiting interactions between harassers and targets.
- \* Providing harassed student with an additional opportunity to obtain a benefit that was denied (e.g., retaking a test/class).
- \* Providing services to a student who was denied a benefit (e.g., academic support services).
- \* Developing, revising, and publicizing:
  - Policy prohibiting harassment and discrimination.
  - Grievance procedures for students to file harassment complaints.
  - Contact information for Title IX/Section 504/Title VI coordinators

Resources to assist with resolving harassment issues are currently available through the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights Equity Assistance Centers ([www2.ed.gov/programs/equitycenters/contacts.html](http://www2.ed.gov/programs/equitycenters/contacts.html)) and the U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service.

If harassment persists, anyone, including educators, can file a complaint with the school district and with the U.S. Depart-

ment of Education's Office of Civil Rights and/or the U.S. Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division.

The person filing the complaint need not be a victim of the harassment but may complain on behalf of another person or group. Public schools are barred from retaliating against any person who has made a complaint, testified, assisted or participated in an investigation. Harassed individuals may also file a lawsuit themselves to counter such discrimination and harassment.

### **U.S. Department of Justice**

Civil Rights Division  
Educational Opportunities Section  
877.292.3804  
Email:[education@usdoj.gov](mailto:education@usdoj.gov)  
[www.justice.gov/crt/edo](http://www.justice.gov/crt/edo)

### **U.S. Department of Education**

Office for Civil Rights  
Educational Opportunities Section  
800.421.3481  
Email: [ocr@ed.gov](mailto:ocr@ed.gov) [www.ed.gov/ocr](http://www.ed.gov/ocr)  
[www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/complaintintro.html) (Online complaint)

School intimidation, harassment, and violence may also be punishable as a crime. Federal and state hate crime laws prohibit intimidating, harassing, or assaulting individuals on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin at school, and prohibit violent acts motivated by someone's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity everywhere. Online or social media threats to inflict physical injury that are motivated by a person's race, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity may also be prosecutable under generally applicable federal laws preventing interstate communication of threats. Federal hate crimes should be reported to the FBI. <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/civil-rights/hate-crimes>

# Global Honor for Centinela Valley Teacher

CVSTA member and theatre arts teacher, Estella Owoimaha-Church has been recognized as one of the top 50 teachers in the world. That's right. The world. The Varkey Foundation has identified Estella as a finalist for its \$1 million Global Teacher Prize! The prize money certainly demands attention. Through this competition, however, the Foundation hopes to draw attention to and elevate respect and admiration for the teaching profession. This year marks the third year the prize has been awarded. It is indeed the largest prize of its kind.

The Varkey Foundation <https://www.varkeyfoundation.org/> seeks to shine a spotlight on a truly exceptional teacher. Teachers from any type of institution—public, private, home—may be nominated and the winner of the prize will be a teacher who is making a difference both in the profession and in the lives of students. The millions of teachers world-wide who inspire and challenge kids each day are eligible. The Foundation



received 20,000 nominations from 179 countries. The finalists represent 37 of those countries.

Estella's parents were both immigrants who came to the United States in search of a better life. She helped raise her siblings while seeking her own education. She feels teachers made it possible for her to succeed and it's important for her to pay forward the support and encouragement she received.

The finalists will travel to Dubai in March to find out who wins the 2017 Global Teacher Prize. The Daily Breeze did a feature article on Estella that you can read here: <http://www.dailybreeze.com/social-affairs/20170130/why-this-beloved-hawthorne-high-drama-teacher-is-up-for-a-1-million-prize>

Centinela Valley Secondary Teachers Association and South Bay United Teachers wish Estella the very best.



## Your CTA State Council Reps are on the job!

Ben Bellingham (CV) , Jason Calizar (PV), Pedro Martinez (CV), and Sarah Robinson (RB) attended the State Council meeting at the end of January. You can read reports from Jason & Sarah at <http://www.sbut.org/ctastateco.htm> (scroll down on the left hand side).

Ben is on the Retirement Committee and reported that CALSTRS will be launching an updated version of the 403bcompare website which will be released in April. The updates will make it much easier to compare products via different search and drill down options.

CALSTRS encourages every member to contact the local member service office and schedule an appointment to review your retirement progress and planning. **(Our closest office is in Downey: 800-228-5453, option 3).**

**PARENTAL LEAVE LAW**  
Now in effect for all districts—January 1, 2017

If you have given birth, are a new father, or have adopted or gained a new foster child within the last 12 months, you are eligible for 12 weeks of parental leave, paid at your sub-differential rate\*, as long as you have been employed by the district for at least a year. (Yes, men too!)

- Leave must be used within 12 months of the birth or adoption/foster of the child
- Only one leave per 12 month period
- Leave does not need to be taken all at once, but must be scheduled with the district if taken intermittently
- \*You will receive sub-differential pay during this leave after you have used up any accumulated sick days. If you do not wish to use your sick days for parental leave, you may still take the leave as unpaid.

For more information, check out the Parental Leave Guideline Sheet at  
<http://www.sbut.org/resources.htm>

## Tax Notes

Don't forget: If you itemize your deductions, you can claim your union dues as a job expense on Schedule A. If you give to the CTA-FACT through your dues deduction, those monies are deductible as charitable giving. Call the office if you need to know how much you paid in 2016.

You can deduct up to \$250 of qualified Educator expenses on Form 1040. This includes professional development courses you have taken related to the curriculum you teach or to the students you teach, as well as books, supplies, equipment and other materials used in the classroom that have not been reimbursed.

We received a handy Educators Deductions list from an area accountant that might help to remind you of possible deductions. Call or email the office if you'd like a copy.

As always, check with your tax advisor for professional tax advice.



CTA members who make a promise to drive safely will be eligible to win a new car from California Casualty. The year-long *Promise to Drive Focused* campaign is dedicated to preventing needless tragedies from inattentive or distracted driving.

K-12 educators and administrators can join the commitment to drive focused and be entered to win at [www.DriveSafePromise.com](http://www.DriveSafePromise.com). The campaign will run from October 20, 2016 through September 1, 2017. The new car winner will be announced in September or October of 2017.