

SBUUT ANNOUNCER

South Bay United
Teachers

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November Election – State Superintendent of Public Instruction

And “Last in, first out”



CTA is encouraging members to vote on November 4 as there are several issues that are of great importance to teachers.

Tom Torlakson, the current Superintendent of Public Instruction, is running for reelection. In his first term, Tom Torlakson helped lead and win the battle to stop budget cuts to California’s schools. He led successful efforts to provide schools with \$1.25 billion in locally controlled funding for new textbooks, teacher training and school technology. Superintendent Torlakson helped expand workplace internship and career training programs as the state implements new, higher education standards in science, mathematics and English/language arts. He has worked to improve school safety, and keep children safe from gangs, drugs and guns. Legislation he wrote led to the development of the largest system of after school programs in the nation, which now reach 4,000 schools around California.

LAST IN, FIRST OUT

Torlakson’s challenger, Marshall Tuck, brings a charter school background to the race and supports major changes in teacher dismissal rules, layoff rules and “teacher tenure” (due process rights). Marshall Tuck supports the *Vergara* decision which ruled, in part, that layoff rules are unconstitutional. His website states:

“If our top goal is to attract and retain the most effective teachers and principals, we have to make sure state laws are aligned with that goal. At the top of my list is the outdated, ineffective state law that forces school boards to base teacher layoffs solely on seniority rather than on classroom effectiveness or other factors.

The impact of this law can be devastating for certain students in our state. Just eight months after the Partnership took over Markham Middle School, we received notices that almost half of our teachers would be laid off, including some of our best. Like most inner-city schools, the majority of our teachers were younger than average, and according to the state education code, seniority was the only criteria for layoffs. Last-in, first-out—that was the law, regardless of the consequences for kids.”

This is certainly not a new viewpoint. What’s missing from those who would promulgate it, however, is how does choosing the “best” teacher work in practice? Some of the “best [new/young] teachers” were laid off. Who were they? How was it determined they were the best? Students liked them more? The principal liked them more? They gave more of their free time? Their bulletin boards were prettier? Their classrooms were quieter? Their students all aced their tests?

When you begin to think in terms of “good, better, best,” the standard by which you are judging becomes extremely important. Would the teachers and principal at your site all agree on the “best” teachers at your site? Do you all consider the same things to be important and effective? As the procedure stands right now, it would be the principal who determines who is “best.” Would that change? How?

Imagine the economy takes a bad turn and the principal must decide who is “best” when determining who will be laid off. The principal decides that a teacher of 25 years who doesn’t stay after school on a regular basis or hasn’t changed her bulletin boards since last semester is not as good as the first year teacher who stays 2 hours after school each day getting her students ready for their standardized tests. 25-year veteran— gone. Or, maybe the principal determines that the experience of the veteran teacher actually makes her “best” and the first year teacher now sues for being laid off since her students’ test scores are better and in her view that clearly makes her “best.”

Those who tout “best” and “most effective” as the criteria to use for economic layoffs must provide details on how they expect to implement such a system before they can justify the claim that it is in the “best interest of the students.”

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Centinela Valley Secondary Teachers Association ▪ Manhattan Beach Unified Teachers Association
Palos Verdes Faculty Association ▪ Redondo Beach Teachers Association



FEE PAYER OR MEMBER?

When you are hired by a local school district as a certificated educator, you become part of the local “bargaining unit” which means you are covered by the contract negotiated by the teachers’ union. You do not have to join the union as a member, but you do have to pay a “representation fee” or “agency fee” which covers the cost of bargaining and enforcement of the contract on your behalf.

Agency Fee payers are not protected

by the chapter liability insurance or legal consultation for non-contract employment matters (parent or student accusations, credentialing issues). Fee Payers are not eligible for chapter benefits such as credit union services, insurance programs, notary services and the tutoring program.

Becoming a member provides you with some great benefits. But it also makes you part of a larger team that together works for the betterment of,

not just your employment conditions, but public education as a whole.

You must be a bargaining unit member and **complete and return an enrollment form** in order to be a full member of your chapter.

NOTE: If you are returning from a leave of absence, your membership may have lapsed. If you are unsure whether or not you are a member, e-mail or call the office.

MAINTAIN YOUR MEMBERSHIP WHILE ON AN UNPAID LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Are you planning on taking a leave of absence due to maternity, illness or other personal reasons? If so, keep in mind the importance of maintaining your Association membership while on leave. While working, your dues are automatically deducted from your paycheck. However during an unpaid leave, your deduction will stop. Therefore, when taking a leave, remember to contact the SBUT office if you wish to continue your membership.

Maintaining your membership while you are on leave ensures your eligibility to participate in the following member benefits programs:

- **CTA Group Legal Services Program (GLSP):** CTA membership must be active before the need for legal services occurs and must be maintained throughout the entire time assistance is being provided and until legal action is concluded.

- **Voluntary life and disability plan:** You may jeopardize your voluntary life and disability coverage underwritten by *The Standard* if membership ceases.
- **BabyWise Program:** If you are on maternity leave and participate in the BabyWise program, CTA membership must be current.
- **Auto and home insurance:** Policies offered by Cal Casualty Auto and Home Insurance Plus may result in a premium increase due to cancellation of your CTA membership.
- **Death & Dismemberment Benefit Plan:** If you cease to be a member of CTA, you cease to be covered under this plan and all previous years of continuous membership are forfeited.

If you have any questions regarding your membership, please contact SBUT at 310-921-2500 or sbut@aol.com

ATTENTION - EDUCATORS NEW TO THE DISTRICT

Not all school districts provide long term disability insurance to employees. If you are a CTA member, you can enroll in CTA's Voluntary Disability and/or Life plans for up to \$200,000 from The Standard without completing the health questionnaire during **your first 120 days of employment.** Check out the programs available at **CTAMemberBenefits.org/TheStandard** or call the office for more information.

ALL MEMBERS

Any CTA member may apply for coverage at any time, but applications will be subject to health evidence underwriting and insurance company approval. **Call or e-mail the SBUT office for an enrollment brochure or visit The Standard website at CTAMemberBenefits.org/TheStandard**

IMPORTANT REMINDERS—Technology use

TECHNOLOGY IN STUDENT HANDS

All members need to be aware that we have had instances where students have recorded teachers either with a digital camera, cell phone or FLiP-type camcorder and posted the images, and in some cases sound, to the Internet. While it is against the law for a student to record a teacher in a classroom without consent, school districts have still been willing to pursue teacher discipline after viewing some of the material. It is very important that teachers and support staff understand that students are everywhere and whether you are “on the job” or on vacation, they may have a camera and an opportunity to take what to them is a funny picture. Professional conduct is a term that is often used when districts want to reprimand a teacher. Be careful that your actions cannot be in any way interpreted as being outside of the district’s definition.

A few guidelines:

- Be very wary of posing with students away from school. Use good judgment.
- If a student has a recording device in the classroom, ask him/her to turn it off and put it away.
- If you allow such devices, establish guidelines for student use in the classroom.
- If your school/district has a policy against the student having cameras, cell phones, etc. follow-through with the appropriate discipline. Mention the prohibition of such devices in your course outline/syllabus.
- Always behave as if you are being recorded.



USE SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY WISELY

Technology has the power to transform and enhance the work you do as education professionals. Be aware of the potential hazards, however, and keep these tips in mind when using school computers:

Acceptable Use Policy

Check if your district has an Acceptable Use Policy for using technology. Your district likely has separate policies for students and employees. The Acceptable Use Policy should define where, when, and how long employees may use computers and network services.

Be Prudent About Content

Don’t access, accept, or transmit anything that can be interpreted as obscene or pornographic. Review the Acceptable Use Policy about any other potentially objectionable material.

Non-Commercial Use

School & college networks usually prohibit using their network and computers for commercial purposes, such as promoting a personal business.

Protect Student Information

All confidential student data such as Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), grades, and all other private data must be secured, even on a computer. Establish a password that will limit access to computers you use for confidential material, and do not share your password with others (ask your technology staff for assistance if needed).

Your Public Employer Owns Your Email

Do not send anything you wouldn’t want read by your employer, or possibly the public. The school district

owns and controls the email system. Even deleted email can be retrieved and used in lawsuits. Do not send any confidential or private email at work.

TIPS ON EMAIL USAGE

- Know your district's employee computer use policy.
- Districts can monitor not only your e-mail conversations, but also the Web sites you visit.
- Electronic transmissions can be a convenient way to communicate with parents and students, but it must be done in a professional way. If the contact is too personal or frequent, it may look like there is an improper relationship forming.
- Once an e-mail is sent it cannot be retracted. Deleting it from your account will not delete it from the district's computer system.
- Avoid irony, sarcasm and humor; they rarely work well in an electronic transmission.
- Remember to log off your account when finished. You are responsible for messages sent under your name, whether you are the author or not.
- Be sure to review and edit before sending — that includes double-checking your recipients.
- Never discuss student records via e-mail, especially those of students with IEPs.

Make sure the SBUT office has your personal email address

SBUT and your union do not use the school district email system. Make sure we have a non-district email address on file for you. Send your personal email address to sbutoffice@aol.com.

WHO ARE WE?

If you are new to your district, "SBUT" may not yet be familiar to you. So who/what is it?

South Bay United Teachers is a joint venture of the Centinela Valley Secondary Teachers Association, the Manhattan Beach Unified Teachers Association, the Palos Verdes Faculty Association, and the Redondo Beach Teachers Association. It is administered by a Board of Directors - with representatives from each chapter. The purpose of South Bay United Teachers is to provide the four local chapters and their members with programs and services through the employment of professional staff and the maintenance of office facilities. South Bay

United Teachers and the four local chapters are affiliated with the California Teachers Association and the National Education Association. These state and national organizations provide support for SBUT's services and programs. Your staff members are Sandra Goins (Executive Director), Elise Tubbs (Managing Director), and Lissa Newton (Administrative Clerk).

Visit the SBUT website (www.sbut.org) and click on the "Who We Are" tab for a link to "Frequently Asked Questions" for more information.

Healthy Me, Better Year Pledge

You matter. Yes, you.

Now that the 2014-2015 school year is in full-swing, NEA HIN (Health Information Network) wants you to take a few minutes and put yourself first. Just like when you are on an airplane and they tell you to put your own oxygen mask on first before helping the child traveling with you, we are asking you to take a pledge to take care of yourself this year.

This simple commitment to you will benefit everyone – students, colleagues, families and the school community. A healthier year for you means a better school year overall.

It couldn't be easier to do:

- Fill out the online pledge form online at <http://www.neahin.org/get-involved/>
- Print out the pledge certificate and display it in your classroom or office for all to see!

Let us know how you are doing! Leave comments on our [Facebook](#) page and/or tweet us at [@NEAHIN](#). No matter where you are sharing your ideas and successes, use the hash tag [#NewSelfie1415](#).

Join us in making 2014-2015 a fantastic, healthy school year. Our staff is taking the pledge too, and we can't wait to cheer you on!



I make the Healthy Me, Better Year Pledge to

(choose 1-6 items):

- * Start my day with a healthy breakfast
- * Choose foods and drinks that nourish me
- * Sit alone with eyes closed for 5 minutes, focused only on my breathing, because high stress levels affect my wellbeing
- * Make time for fun! I will take at least 10 minutes in my day for laughter and joy, wherever I find it! (A good joke, a funny cat video, singing in the car - we won't judge!)
- * Move my body for at least 15 minutes every day
- * Find a few minutes daily to get outside, breathe in fresh air and recharge my batteries