

With CSO Members' Assistance

Virtual charter teachers win key PERB ruling, despite CAVA management retaliation tactics

A group of workers demand that their management recognize their union. Management refuses and begins firing workers.

It may remind you of the movie *Norma Rae* or the early days of organizing in America in the 1930s – but, unfortunately, it's California in the 21st century.

The villains this time are the operators of the California Virtual Academy (CAVA), a statewide charter school, who have tried mightily to break the teachers' fledgling CTA

chapter by refusing to recognize it.

With the help of dedicated CSO members, the courageous CAVA teachers have not only formed an ef-

It may remind you of the movie Norma Rae...

fective chapter, they have won a key battle before the Public Employment Relations Board, the state agency that oversees public sector bargaining,

forcing management to recognize the CAVA association.

The CTA members have been frustrated that CAVA officials have ignored their advocacy for their students. Management has also retaliated by either reducing the paid-hours of key chapter leaders or firing them outright.

The PERB ruling, released in December, comes after 17 months of hard work by the teachers and intense CTA and CSO advocacy on their behalf.



Three CTA teachers at CAVA – from r. Debbie Scoltock, an algebra and geometry high school teacher; Sara Vigrass, an elementary teacher; and Jen Shilen, a social sciences teacher – have spoken to legislators and their staff about legal changes needed to create more accountability at charter schools.

Advocacy Appeal

Winter 2016

INSIDE

- Teacher Shortage...2
- Facebook question.3
- CAVA Organizing..4



A CSO publication

The struggle today: Fighting for rights in 2016



CSO Member Guillermo "Memo" Durgin is ordered from a meeting by Alameda County deputies. (Screen capture from CTA member cellphone video)

Last October, when the Vice Principal of San Lorenzo High School called in the Alameda County Sheriff in an attempt to prevent CTA Organizer Memo Durgin from meeting with educators during their duty free lunch, SLEA and CSO knew we were in for a fight! One of the site reps at the meeting filmed the confrontation, with the video going viral on Facebook. It can be seen by searching this link: <http://on.fb.me/1PQI4jb> or find the San Leandro E.A. Facebook page.

Over the course of the last year, San Lorenzo EA leaders and 15 or more CSO staff have been working side-by-side at worksites to engage

members and parents, as part of SLEA's contract campaign. Located between the union towns of Hayward and San Leandro, San Lorenzo is a small unincorporated area of about 23,000, with a large Latino population.

97% of San Lorenzo teachers authorized their leadership to call a strike, if needed, to secure the schools that San Lorenzo students deserve

The bargaining dispute involves a salary increase that keeps San Lorenzo competitive with surrounding districts so that quality educators stay in San Lorenzo. The District had 90 vacancies this year. Other issues include class size reduction for ELD students and teachers receiving the same health care as administrators.

(See SLEA, Page 2)

Where will the teachers come from?

Many issues contribute to teacher shortage

It was only a few years ago that teachers in California had to worry about losing their jobs thanks to budget cuts during the Great Recession. Now with a rebounding economy and the cost of living soaring in places like the Silicon Valley, school districts are facing another type of crisis – finding enough qualified applicants to fill open positions.

What is the cause of this teacher shortage?

For those paying attention to the popular narrative about public education, there has been a sustained assault on the teaching profession. We know that teachers work hard every day – often way beyond what they are contractually required to do. As more and more demands are placed on them, many may ask if it's really worth it. In conversations with teachers, many caution their own children and their students from going into teaching.

Demands of the job aren't the only reason there is a

teacher shortage. The cost of living in some California school districts is quickly outpacing the amount that teachers are paid. In some cases, teachers have seen their housing costs substantially increase. This forces them to make hard choices: stay in their current job and move for a long commute, accept spending 50% of their income on housing, or possibly leave teaching altogether for jobs that pay more.

What is the cause of this teacher shortage?

Many teachers who work in high cost areas have given up on the idea of ever owning their own home.

Some school districts are trying to address this housing crisis problem by creating special housing for teachers. Both San Francisco Unified and Cupertino Union have been in the news for exploring this option. For some this is seen as a positive move from school districts to help with the teacher shortage, but others liken it to

(Continued on Page 3)

SLEA: Respect is the overarching issue

(Continued from Page 1)

The overarching issue is insisting that teachers receive overall respect from Superintendent Fred Brill and the school board majority, who seem intent on polarizing the entire community.

As you might expect from such a situation, the District has stooped to new lows in their efforts to divide and intimidate members. These ef-

forts have backfired. CSO staff have recently concluded another round of site meetings as part of a big push for a very strong SLEA general membership strike authorization vote.

The results of that vote, announced on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 showed that 97% of San Lorenzo teachers authorized their leadership to call a strike, if needed, to secure the schools that San Lorenzo

students deserve. Over 80% of San Lorenzo EA members participated in the vote. The fact-finding hearing will have occurred by the time you read this.

If you see the San Lorenzo delegation to State Council, make sure you show them your support for their stand in support of the teaching profession and the students they serve.



Advocacy Appeal is produced by the California Staff Organization, the union for professional departmental and Regional UniServ Staff who work for the 325,000 members of the California Teachers Association. Comments or inquiries may be emailed to calstaffcommunications@gmail.com. Find us online at www.calstaff.org or search Facebook for California Staff Organization.

Cost of living, cost of housing, make positions harder to fill

(Continued from Page 2) the old “company towns” where workers were beholden to their employer for housing

Many teachers who work in high cost areas have given up on the idea of ever owning their own home.

and other necessities.

Right now, for the first time in a number of years, locals have leverage. In negotiations, locals should be pushing not only for better compensation, but also language that will make working and living conditions better.

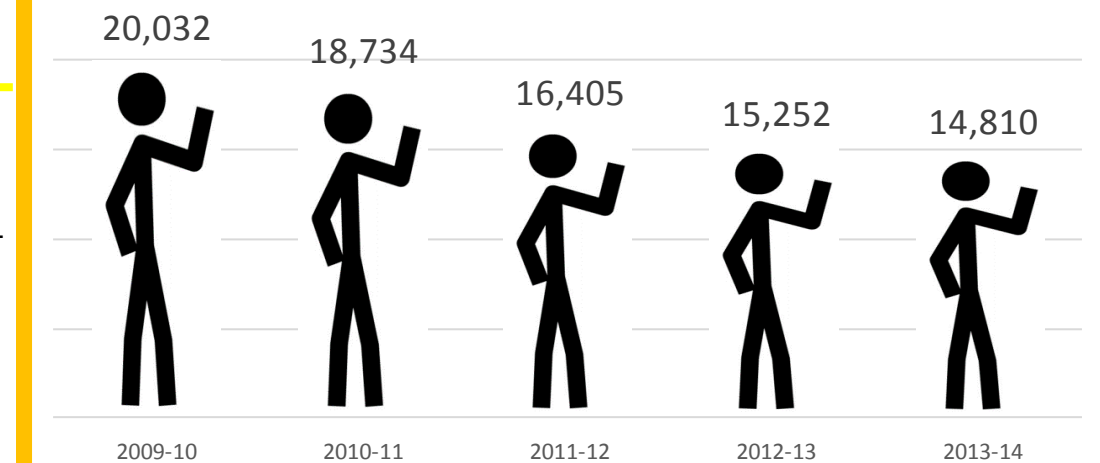
The Washington Post

Report: Why California's teaching shortage could worsen — and how to reverse it

By Valerie Strauss, January 24

“A new report says that California's teacher shortage...at a 12-year low...is likely to get worse unless targeted steps are taken to stem it.” (<http://wapo.st/1NygLY3>)

Total New Teaching Credentials Issued in California (Source: CTC)



Facebook question: In 15 words (or fewer), what is the most important thing we can do to stop the growing teacher shortage?

“Pay them more” — Sherry Posnick-Goodwin.

“Stop disrespecting teachers, provide the basic materials necessary for learning.” — Kathy Rallings.

“Attract quality educators for the caring and dedicated professionals they are by respecting them in word, deed, and compensation for their education,

time, and experience.” — Jolene Barrow Tripp.

“The culture of the profession needs to be elevated to the nobility it deserves. Period “ — Mark DeWeerd

Find us on Facebook at California Staff Organization to see all of the responses and to answer our next question — What can every union member do to make all members more connected to their local?