



JUNE 2024



In The Know

CSEA's County Office of Education Committee Newsletter



Summer times; family time!

CO-CHAIR'S COMMENTS

by Irene Herrera

Webster's definition:

innovation (noun)

1: a new idea, method, or device

2: the introduction of something new

The meaning of *innovate* is to make changes or do something in a new way. Innovation is crucial to the continuing success of any organization. It is driven by curiosity, creativity, and continuous improvement. Embracing change helps us adapt to everyday life, and presents opportunities for personal growth and a journey to success. There are many benefits of an innovative union including increased workplace engagement, the ability to attract quality employees, increased morale, increased productivity, and more. Innovation is essential to provide better services to our members, their families, and communities. I was inspired by an innovative CSEA member who shares her story on how the union was brought back to their

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chapter! Please enjoy the **Members Matter** feature article on the next page.

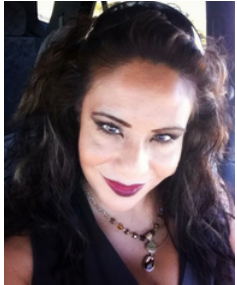
"Legacy is not what I did for myself. Its what I'm doing for the next generation."
Vitor Belfort



MEMBERS MATTER

CSEA’s Core Value, **Innovation** -- The Culmination of all other values, showing that an empowered, inclusive, respectful, and transparent environment is one where innovation can thrive.

We promote innovation that is forward-thinking, encourages continuous improvement, and fosters the exploration of new ideas to enhance our union’s service.



Meet **Patricia (Patty) Valenzuela**, President, of the newly established **Colusa County Office of Education, Chapter #799**.

Editors Note: In April’s issue, we welcomed Colusa COE #799 back into the fold.

We reached out to Patty, and asked her the following questions.

What process was undertaken to bring back the Union?

I was a member of CSEA when I was first employed at CCOE in 2007 as a Program Service Assistant. For unknown reasons to me, in approximately 2009, a majority of members decided to vote the union out; I was one of three who had voted against this action, but ultimately, we were out-voted and the union was disbanded.

I was raised with the belief that there is strength in numbers and a union is a great way to get representation -- fair wages and working conditions. My dad marched with Cesar Chavez and was a member of the National Farm Workers Association, and he instilled in me the power of a Union.

I am originally from San Diego, and when I moved to this agricultural area, I became more aware of how minority people are treated unfairly, especially those who are not fluent in English. In our community, it is very common for someone with a degree of Hispanic descent to get overlooked/passed over for a promotion/pay raise.

We have lost teachers (working for CCOE over 20-plus years) that have been denied a promotion while an outside person was hired for the position with no “previous experience” (friend of the director /superintendent).

Since 2020, we lost approximately 50% of our teaching staff. Salaries are another major factor for staff leaving. I have been employed with CCOE for almost 17 years and have not received a raise since approximately 2012 due to being maxed out on steps. In our position, (PSA’s), we have four steps. Some management positions have up to 20. For an agency that is 80% Hispanic, not one position of upper management is held by a Hispanic person.

I had begun the process of trying to bring the union back in June of 2022 due to new management being hired in 2020. PSA’s, teachers, and administration staff had confided in me, of the struggles they were having with certain persons in management positions, and as PSA’s, we were being given more duties to our job description under "**other duties as assigned**" -- doing more in the health specialist position, recruitment, and being doormen for when the Center doors are locked for safety, between 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

This is what set a fire under me to really get working on bringing the union back and with the help of two other PSA’s (**Esther Rocha & Ivonne Medina**), we began recruiting, not only people in administration, but also in teaching positions. In the beginning it was an uphill battle; they felt it was necessary to join a union, even though they were afraid of retaliation. Over time, and being tired of the

(Continue on page 3)

MEMBERS MATTER

treatment they had been receiving from upper management; they decided to join the union -- this was the only option for better working conditions and fair salaries.

Her background as a CSEA member

I have been employed with Colusa County Office of Education/Children's Services since September 2007 at the Williams Children's Center. My position is Programs Services Assistant II, in Administration. My job consists of working with families enrolling their children in different State & Federally funded programs such as State Preschool & Head Start programs, along with childcare programs for Infants & Toddlers. And, for the seasonal Migrant Program which consisted of enrolling families for childcare, (April through November).

I transferred to the Colusa Children's Center in January 2022, continuing in the same position but at a different site. PSA's are responsible for starting the application process, verifying eligibility (income calculations), completing enrollments, maintaining family files, recruitment, completing family fees when applicable, overall office duties (answering phone calls for the site, and translating when necessary); having a good working relationship with the families and the community at large.

A Typical Caseload

A case load for a PSA varies, depending on the classroom you are responsible for.

Currently, I am responsible for an Infant and Toddler Classroom, a Preschool Classroom and two additional Preschool classrooms off site; and, availability for enrollment (staffing per classroom). I have had a case load of anywhere from 70 - 150 children.

I personally love working with my families and their children. I think it's in my nature to want to help others (my mom was a nurse), and I

(Continued from page 2)

find it very rewarding when a family has better opportunities, (employment/attending school), I am helping them with obtaining childcare or having their four-year old attend a preschool.

I love my job, and I am definitely not in it to get wealthy! I don't believe anyone in education is in their position assuming they will get rich! This is also the reason why I decided to bring back the Union.

Hobbies when she is not volunteering for CSEA and her chapter as President

My hobbies are taking road trips to the coast; I love the ocean, hiking, and swimming. I am an avid Peloton member (love spinning and working out).

My other two kids are my Corgis, Maya and Max, who are my constant companions. I take them on walks every weekend along the river levy where I live. And, I enjoy baking during the holidays for the children of my co-workers.

Patty exemplifies CSEA's Core Value - Innovation! Patty, thank you for your perseverance for your members and your chapter; **You Do Matter!**



Patty's youngest son, Cristian, student at American River Community College, under the STEM Program, will soon be transferring to U.C. Davis is pictured with Patty's two favorite Corgis



INNOVATION - WORD SEARCH

Have some fun with Innovation! Hidden below are 16 words related to this CSEA core value. Can you find them all?

D D Y T K A H S I P Y O U U X S S M S G
 H G M Z T X Y T J Z I J P Z E T G N S R
 N O M I M P R O V E M E N T J F T Z Q O
 A J Q D I U P G H V J V U D W C B P R W
 L P C K D J N Y O G E R E G Q D X B N T
 C R K C R J C N A O Q U N I O N Y W I H
 A O R U H R G I N N O V A T I O N Q P M
 E M P O W E R M E N T H Q S F A R J I T
 R O L V F C N E E S J A R T O Q L K A E
 X T R A N S P A R E N C Y I S L M U V C
 V E L F O P K X P E W A V Q T T P A C W
 O R E F T I E M U G M J W D E V X H X Z
 K E J R O D J I V E X P L O R A T I O N
 W I S E Y E E N H A N C E C O H X C C V
 Y N W V U A K K B F A M S H I C N I X X
 I V Q Q E S I N C L U S I V I T Y F T V
 B E T G C S E A J A F S P O L S L H D L
 J N U C J M E H R N C E R A K H K C D N
 H T M Q G J L V L W J I K N D A N F D E
 W H J T Z T E O C H A N G E P Q J R F W

TRANSPARENCY
 IMPROVEMENT
 REINVENT
 CHANGE

EMPOWERMENT
 INCLUSIVITY
 ENHANCE
 IDEAS

EXPLORATION
 INNOVATION
 PROMOTE
 UNION

CSEA
 FOSTER
 GROWTH
 NEW

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR CHAPTERS

Meet Estibaliz Diaz, CSEA's 2024 Member of the Year recipient



Please join us in congratulating Riverside COE, Chapter #693, 2nd Vice President Estibaliz (Liz) Diaz as a **CSEA 2024 Member of the Year!**

Every year CSEA honors five exceptional members across the state of California to be presented with this prestigious, state level award. They are recognized for their commitment and dedication to the students of California, community involvement, and activism in CSEA.

Liz is a longtime volunteer of the local women's shelter as well as a volunteer at the at-risk youth academy where she supported the students' transition into safe housing and assisted them in securing their education. She and her daughter foster homeless cats and dogs until they are able to find safe and loving homes for them. Liz is also a migrant services volunteer and makes the 3-hour trek to Calexico to support our members out in the Imperial Valley and to provide services for migrant workers by donating and volunteering.

As an Attendance Registration Technician for RCOE, Liz provides logistical assistance for her students and encourages them to reach their full potential.

In addition to attending graduate school to better serve her students, she advocates for both her students and fellow CSEA Members by attending Board of Education meetings to address the Board on policies that affect both her students and members she represents.

As the Chapter Vice President, Steward, Negotiations Team member, head of our Site Representatives, and Assistant to our Regional Representative, she works tirelessly to protect our members and works hard to make sure their voices are heard.

Liz's nominator shares that "Liz has the biggest heart and is always ready to help our members whenever they need support. She is patient, humble, kind, and is always your biggest supporter. She has worked hard to establish positive relationships with our members and is a beloved and trusted leader you can always count on. Her incalculable contributions to our Chapter for the past 17 years have made her an invaluable member of our Chapter and I can't fit into words how blessed I am to be able to call her my coworker, my Vice President, and my friend".

If you see Liz, be sure to congratulate her on her extraordinary achievement in securing one of CSEA's two highest state level honors.

We thank her for her hard work and tremendous contributions to our Chapter and our community and we look forward to cheering her on as she is presented her **2024 Member of the Year Award** at the 98th Annual CSEA Conference in San Jose, July 28-August 1, 2024.

Thank you Liz for putting Chapter #693 on the map, we are so proud of you!

CONGRATULATIONS!!!



Left photo: E-board being sworn in.

Right photo: E-board volunteers at the Migrant Services Program

Reprinted with permission: Facebook,
posted March 26, 2024

COE MEMBERS BUILD THE UNION

Advanced Organizing Institute (AOI)

By Katie Andersen, San Diego COE Chapter #568



CSEA held an Advanced Organizing Institute (AOI) at the beginning of May held at the Training Center, Santa Fe Field Office. It was the first AOI that the organization has held in over 20 years, and was expanded from one day to four days. Among the participants, two were members of COE chapters - **Jennie Curto** of San Luis Obispo Chapter #444 and **Catherine Wind-Muro** of San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools Chapter #633.

Catherine was motivated to go to the Advance OI training because it had been 20 years, from the last advance OI training. She wanted to learn more about Organizing and how to delegate the ideas to let others help and expand their knowledge. The first OI training that she went to was in 2016 at headquarters and was more about how to use the tool box and backward calendar.

Jennie originally attended the Organizing Institute in 2020, when the world was learning how to navigate COVID restrictions, including CSEA's Training Department. "In the middle of trying to learn and master what our LRR's were attempting their best to do, we engaged in the present time. We saw the swiftness and the strength in CSEA backing our membership. Cellulares were ringing as LRR's were being contacted by both chapters and districts for their assistance," recalls Curto.

Because this was the advanced version of the Organizing Institute, each participant was asked to think of an issue that affected their own chapter and use the skills they were learning at AOI to develop an organizing campaign to bring back to their chapter leadership. The training offered new skills to solve real problems in real time.

Catherine's issue was to focus her final AOI project was to increase the work day by one

hour, which would increase from six to seven hours so that those employees would get to work that one school year and receive one service credit.

Currently, employees at San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools have to work 1.5 school years to earn one service credit.

Catherine worked 20 years at six hour days for 181 days and to date her service credit is 13.75 years. With the increase in hours, those employees would qualify for FMLA which is not the case now. **Catherine's** organizing efforts included buttons and banners stating the benefits of working for just one more hour.

Jennie's issue focused on the uniqueness of being a COE chapter; compensation while working with a County Office of Education. Because COE's are funded differently from districts, COE chapters have to negotiate differently. Part of **Jennie's** project included an education campaign, letting members know the reasons behind some of the decisions that chapter leaders of COE's have to make on members' behalf.

During the campaign presentations, the participants also got to give each other scores on criteria taught in the course, allowing each participant to offer feedback to their fellow organizers, offering another unique opportunity for participants to demonstrate their new knowledge.

When asked about the differences in OI and Advanced OI, **Catherine** commented on how much things have changed. "I mean in the first OI training in 2016 we did homework in a group and this time homework was independent. This group was smaller and more knowledgeable than the first OI training."
(Continue on page 7)

COE MEMBERS BUILD THE UNION (Continued from page 6)

Catherine plans on incorporating what she learned by mapping out the school locations to know what members and potential members (PMs) are at that location in order to sign up those PMs.

Jennie is going to facilitate the information she received in the same manner it was received. "I plan to continue networking with my fellow attendees. I may not be able to travel six hours to speak at the mic.; however, it will only take me a few short minutes to create a public comment."

The Advanced OI group had a bonus trainer, and a familiar COE face. **Katie Andersen**, currently a Member Intern Program participant, was part of the training team.

When she's not a Labor Relations Representative Intern, Katie is a member of

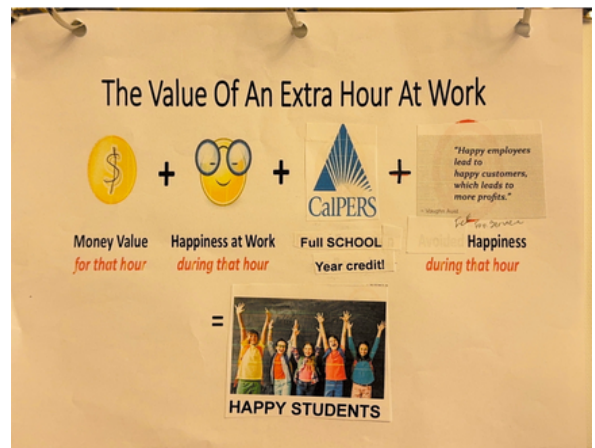
San Diego County Office of Education Chapter 568. "I am happy to have been part of this training, and working with a fabulous group of LRRs to help develop a brand new curriculum."

While COE chapters are a small part of CSEA's total membership, it was a testament to the leadership of these small but mighty chapters that three of them were represented at this new training.

Incorporating CSEA's core values, **Jennie** stated, "We all will continue to EMPOWER our members, reflect the RESPECT due to them (us), be INNOVATIVE in how we get the job done, be INCLUSIVE to all our CSEA members, and work in TRANSPARENCY on what we are organizing on."



L-R: Posing for a pic after the Picket Sign Party at Advanced Organizing Institute are COE chapter members: Jennie Curto, Katie Andersen and Catherine Wind-Muro. Jennie and Catherine participated as members, while Katie was on the training team during her time in the Member Intern Program.



Catherine's project: Visual posters used

COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE

COE Committee Holds Meeting in Sacramento

By Irenea Herrera, Co-chair

The County Office of Education Committee met in-person on May 8-9, 2024, at the CSEA Governmental Relations Office in Sacramento. The meeting began with a fun ice breaker activity to help members get to know more about one another.

Xong Lor, CSEA Legislative Advocate, gave an informative Budget Presentation and addressed questions regarding County Office of Education funding. She also encouraged chapters to take advantage of the Classified School Employee Summer Assistance Program (CSESAP) in which the State will match funds to participating LEAs and are paid out during the summer recess period to participating classified employees.

Members continued with a full agenda discussing COE Committee resources, communications, future Open House topics, and technology assistance. They also reviewed the committee website and Facebook pages. Irenea Herrera, Co-chair, shared a draft of the Annual Report to Conference 2024 for member input.

Amy Gonzales, Staff Coordinator, gave a presentation on Charter Schools. There was important discussion on [low performing charter schools](#) taking monies away from our public schools. New laws have been passed for more transparency and greater accountability on charter school petitions and renewals. See also: [Charter Schools: Unregulated growth and lack of accountability.](#)

There was also pre-planning of the committee booth at Annual Conference, and members shared decorating ideas.

Lastly, COE Committee members enjoyed a self-guided tour of the California State Capitol Museum, and both the Senate and Assembly were in session.



County Office of Education Committee receives a training on the State budget process by Xong Lor, CSEA Legislative Advocate.



California State Capitol temporary entrance due to Capitol Annex construction.

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California State Assembly Gallery



COE Committee Members on the second floor rotunda. Left to right: Catherine Wind-Muro, Araceli Garcia, Ruth Gloria, and Irene Herrera, Co-Chair



California State Senate Gallery

Photo credits: Irene Herrera



TRANSPARENCY - Answer Key (May 2024 Issue)

Juneteenth

Emancipation Day

Juneteenth Overview

Juneteenth (June 19) is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States.

Passed by Congress and signed by President Joe Biden, Juneteenth was established as a federal holiday in 2021.

All CSEA Offices are closed in honorarium.

Juneteenth (officially Juneteenth National Independence Day) is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the ending of slavery in the United States. Its name is a portmanteau of the words "June" and "nineteenth", as it is celebrated on the anniversary of June 19, 1865, when as the American Civil War was ending, Major General Gordon Granger ordered the final enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation in Texas. Originating in Galveston, Juneteenth has since been observed annually in various parts of the United States, often broadly celebrating African-American culture. **Source: Wikipedia**

Lobby Day 2024 in Sacramento

CSEA PACE Committee and CSEA Legislative Committee members attend Lobby Day 2024 in Sacramento. Pictured left to right, back row: Gene Baker, Legislative Committee Area B, David Kong, PACE Committee Area C, John Laird, CA Senator, Bradley Freeland, PACE Committee Area B, front row: Xong Lor, CSEA Legislative Advocate, Mrigendra Steiner, Legislative Committee Area C.

Lobby Day 2024 highlights can be found in [CSEA Focus Magazine May/June 2024](#).

Photo credit: David Kong, Retiree, Monterey COE #35

Area E, Region 17, newly Jacketed Union Stewards, SCOE Chapter #668 during the RDOF Member Recognition, held May 4 in Merced

Pictured L-R: Armada Ramirez, white collar rep., Event Planner for five years; Desiree Ransom, blue collar rep., Data Specialist in Graphics for 7 years; Maria Ochoa, white collar rep., Secretary, Para Educator for five years; Joseph Gomes, white collar, Nurse rep., LVN for three years.

Photo credit: Dianne Warner, Stanislaus County #668



READ & LEARN



- [Resolutions Bulletin 2-24; 2024 Conference Resolutions: Committee Reports and Recommendations](#)

Please review this year's Conference Resolutions, which include committee analysis and recommendations for delegate action at the 2024 Annual Conference

Ref.: Leadership mail, dated 4/1/24



Photo Credit: Canva



Save with CSEA Amusements and Attractions

Did you know that CSEA has discounts on amusements and attractions for all seasons? Log into csea.com/fun to access your member benefits for discounts on the following and more.

How can you access these discounts, you ask?

Access these discounts and purchase tickets at csea.com/fun!

Coming Soon: Waterparks, like South Bay Shores at Great America, The Island, Wild Water, Wild River, and Knott's Soak City. Check back in at csea.com/fun soon!

Save some change and have some fun with CSEA!

For additional questions or assistance, call CSEA Member Benefits at (866) 487-2732 or email memberbenefits@csea.com.

Ref.: CSEA Member Benefits, emailed 4/29/24



The COE Committee wishes you a pleasant summer! WE WILL RETURN IN SEPTEMBER with new issues of "In The Know!"



AFL-CIO

Know Your Committee



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COE COMMITTEE'S PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of the County Office of Education Committee is to research, educate, communicate and network regarding the issues and concerns of the county office of education chapters — providing a liaison between members, the board of directors, committees, governmental relations and the Legislature, while acknowledging the differences and similarities of county offices of education, community colleges, and K-12's.

"In The Know"

Monthly Newsletter of the CSEA County Office of Education Committee

Editor: Ruth Gloria

Content: Ruth Gloria, Irene Herrera, CSEA Communications

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<https://csea.com/committees/county-office-of-education-coe>

Upcoming Committee Meetings

June 5

July 28 & 29:

Visit the COE Committee Booth at the Annual Conference, San Jose