



FEBRUARY 2025



In The Know

CSEA's County Office of Education Committee Newsletter

Oh, How We Love Our COE Members!

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CHAIR'S COMMENTS

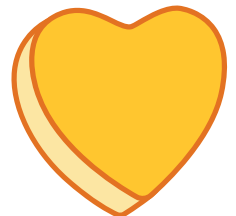
by **Katie Miller Andersen**

Welcome to February, the month in which we celebrate love in all forms.

This month the COE Committee is choosing to highlight ways that we can show love and support in our communities in a time that we need it most- whether it's making a donation to the Dorothy Bjork Humanitarian Fund to help our CSEA siblings living through the disaster of recent wildfires, cheering on the successes of a fellow COE chapter, providing access to affordable health care for our members, or being a safe space for the students we serve, every action we take as CSEA members is an action of compassion.

During a time where it seems like acts of kindness has gone out the window, I am thankful for my CSEA community for proving that love for others still exists. Our core values of Inclusivity and Respect lead directly to love in action. To all of my CSEA siblings, I love you and thank you for all that you do for your members, schools and communities.

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CSEA HELPS MEMBERS IMPACTED BY SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA FIRES

By Adam Weinberger, Association President
January 9, 2025

To our CSEA members, we are here to help you navigate these challenging times. If your primary residence has been made uninhabitable due to the fires, you may be eligible for up to \$1,000 in immediate emergency assistance through the Dorothy Bjork Assistance Fund's Emergency Assistance Program. Members experiencing significant financial hardship may qualify for up to \$500 in relief through our Humanitarian Assistance Program.

We encourage any members needing assistance to contact CSEA Member Benefits for guidance on applying to these programs. Together, we can help ease some of the burdens these tragic events have caused.

We extend our compassion and commitment to working together as neighbors to support recovery efforts in the broader community. Let us rally behind one another to bring strength, healing, and hope in this time of adversity.

Please visit csea.com/assistance or contact us directly to apply for assistance or to make a tax-deductible donation to support our fellow members in need. In these uncertain times, let us stay safe, informed, and united.

Do you know a CSEA member in need?
Call CSEA Member Benefits at (866) ITS-CSEA (487-2732).

Emergency Assistance Program *CSEA policy 1010.4*

If a member's primary residence is deemed uninhabitable as the result of a catastrophic event such as an earthquake, fire or flood, that member can apply for up to \$1,000 in immediate emergency assistance.

This program may also be used to assist eligible organizations that are providing aid in areas that have been declared federal disaster areas as a result of a catastrophic event (e.g. fire, earthquake, or flood).

Emergency Assistance Application
Questions and assistance: **Contact CSEA Member Benefits**



**Dorothy
Bjork**
ASSISTANCE FUND 

CSEA provides cash assistance up to \$1,000 to members who have been evacuated or lost their home due to natural disasters, and also provides up to \$500 in assistance to members experiencing financial emergencies due to circumstances beyond their control.

Funds are provided from the CSEA Dorothy Bjork Assistance Fund, which relies solely on donations. Donations are tax-deductible. Thank you for any donation you can give.

IMPERIAL COUNTY COE #614 HOSTS CSEA'S JANUARY BOARD MEETING

by Katie Andersen, COE Committee Chair

In January of 2025 the CSEA Board of Directors held their monthly meeting in Area K at the Imperial Valley County Office of Education's Administrative Conference Center in El Centro, Calif. The hosting chapter was Imperial Valley Office of Education #614, however, there were many other Imperial County chapter leaders involved in welcoming the Board to "The Valley," as it's known - which is exactly the hospitality that Imperial County is known for.

Chapter leaders from across Area K (which is composed of San Diego and Imperial Counties), including retirees, filled the room early in the morning on Saturday, January 18.

It was a special celebration for ICOE 614; during this meeting, the chapter was officially released from their **administratorship** and their duly elected chapter officers were sworn in by Association President Adam Weinberger.

In his remarks during the meeting, Weinberger acknowledged the "truly remarkable transformation," the chapter has made, "in such a short amount of time." The chapter was under administratorship for about a year. Most chapters that are in similar situations take one to two years to get things back on track.

Under the leadership of appointed administrator Maria Elena Perdomo, appointed President Arlene Mercado, RR Susan Zarate Sandoval, Senior LRR Angela Schwab and LRR Jesus Ferrer,



Chapter 614 e-board, center, flanked by LRR Jesus Ferrer (far left) and Senior LRR Angela Schwab welcome the CSEA Board of Directors to the Imperial Valley. (Photo Credit Krystle Casares)

the chapter had the daunting task of rebuilding. Over the course of a year, and through a series of leadership identification and development sessions, Mercado was able to identify 28 member volunteers who filled the roles of executive officers, stewards, site representatives and committee members for the chapter.

After recognizing Chapter 614's accomplishments, the board meeting continued with board reports recognizing CSEA's attendance at celebrations for Martin Luther King Jr. Day hosted by both the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor and the AFL-CIO at their Civil Rights Conference. **Continued on pg. 4**

IMPERIAL COUNTY COE #614 HOSTS CSEA'S JANUARY BOARD MEETING (CONTINUED FROM PG.3)



There was a report given by PACE Committee Chair, John Sullivan, asking the Board to oppose AB 19, and endorse candidates in Patrick Ahrens (AD 26) and LaShae Sharp-Collins (AD 79). The Board voted affirmatively on the PACE Committee's recommendations.

There was also time reserved in the meeting for all newly elected officers who were in attendance to be installed by none other than AP Adam Weinberger.

Kevin Palki was sworn in as the Area F Alternate Director at this meeting as well.

Several times a year the CSEA Board of Directors travel from headquarters in San Jose to one of the other 10 areas in the state to showcase CSEA as an organization, and give members access to the board. Area K and ICOE Chapter 614 were excellent hosts, showcasing the warmth and camaraderie that is found throughout the Imperial Valley.



Photos: Top Left- Members arrived from Areas K, F and G for the board meeting held at ICOE facilities. Top Right- The Board gets to work. Middle Right- Any newly elected officers in attendance were invited to be installed and given the oath of office by AP Weinberger. Bottom Right- ICOE 614 E-board with Area K Director Troy Johnson. (Photo Credit Krystle Casares)



CHANGE IN LAW PROMPTS “YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY AND CALPERS PENSION” VIDEO REMOVAL

This video has been removed from the CalPERS YouTube channel due to information presented that was impacted by the Social Security Fairness Act, **that was signed into law by President Biden on January 6, 2025.**

The Social Security Fairness Act repealed existing legislation for the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). You can find more information on the [CalPERS website](#).

What was the Windfall Elimination Provision?

Prior to January 6, 2025, these members were subject to a federal law that could reduce their Social Security benefits, known as the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). The law limited benefits for anyone in a “non-covered” position unless they had 30 or more years of “substantial earnings” from a different job where Social Security taxes had been collected.

(No matter your work history, Social Security has no impact on your CalPERS pension).

The WEP was repealed by the Social Security Fairness Act, signed into law by President Biden on January 6, 2025. The new law is retroactive to benefits paid in 2024, but it is currently unclear how long it will take the Social Security Administration to fully implement its provisions.

CalPERS manages neither the changes brought about by the new federal law nor the eventual additional payments. You can contact the Social Security Administration for more information.

What was the Government Pension Offset?

The Social Security Fairness Act also rescinded a federal law known as the Government Pension Offset (GPO). This law applied to those who receive a government pension that is based on employment not covered by Social Security, and you are eligible for your spouse or your surviving spouse's Social Security benefits.

The GPO provisions did not impact members whose employment has always been covered by Social Security.

As with the repeal of the WEP, some members are likely to see additional benefits paid once the Social Security Administration determines how best to implement the change. CalPERS does not manage these changes. You can contact the Social Security Administration for more information.

Who to Contact

For more information, [read the Social Security Administration's update on the new law](#). You can also [contact](#) the agency directly or [search](#) for a local office.

Ref.: Received by CalPers, emailed on Jan. 9, 2025





SUMMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Get paid next summer!

What if the state kicked in one dollar for every dollar you earned?

The Classified School Employee Summer Assistance Program (CSESAP) and the Classified Community College Employee Summer Assistance Program (CCCESAP) provide employees working 11 months or fewer with a unique opportunity to set aside up to 10 percent of their paycheck and have the state match those funds dollar for dollar.

If you earn the maximum allowable income and set aside 10 percent, you could potentially earn up to \$6,000 dollars in additional money.

This state-funded Summer Assistance program is specifically designed to help classified employees who don't receive a paycheck during the summer months.

Thanks to CSEA-sponsored bill AB 1691, the Summer Assistance Program was fully funded by the state and expanded to include community college staff. The program is a victory for classified staff across the state and is an amazing benefit that would not be possible without the power of unity and CSEA.

Is your district participating?

Make sure your district is participating in the program. The district must notify classified employees that they

are participating by January 1, 2025. If your district does not participate, speak to your chapter leadership about encouraging your district to join.

How do I qualify?

- If you work 11 months or fewer a year and earn less than \$62,400 from your regular job assignment, you may qualify.
- Any work you do outside of the school district does not affect your eligibility.
- You must be employed with your district for at least one year before signing up for the program.

How does this program work?

1. Your district must first agree to participate in the program.
2. Once your district opts in, you will need to sign up.
3. The state will contribute funds—up to a dollar-for-dollar match.
4. Receive your withheld pay along with matching funds by August 2026.

Note: If you are no longer eligible to receive Summer Assistance Program pay, you can still collect matching funds for the months you were eligible, but only during the summer period you were due to receive those funds.

More Information

For more information on the Summer Assistance Program, please contact your chapter leadership and Labor Relations Representative or call your CSEA Field Office today!

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR CHAPTERS?

By Jennie Curto, Chapter President of San Luis Obispo COE, Chapter #444

FB posted 12/8/24, reprinted with permission

Thank you all who supported our CSEA chapter fundraiser for the **Central Coast Autism Spectrum Center**.

Our chapter in a matter of days raised \$1,210 for this great community serving program.

On December 1, 2024, we were able to present a check to them. **Pictured below:** Left: Alan Wood-Chapter Secretary and Area I Legislative Committee Rep. Right: Carrie Nunes Wood, Board Member of CCASC accepts the check presented by Alan. (Carrie is also a member of CSEA Chapter #275 of Lucia Mar.)



Congratulations to our basket winner: Cheryl VonderAhe!!

****Our chapter has decided to take on a philanthropic cause every fall. *If you know of a deserving non-profit, please contact any CSEA classified staff member from our San Luis Obispo COE and gain their nomination for consideration.*****

Past beneficiaries of our fundraisers: Dorothy Bork Humanitarian Fund, ECHO-Atascadero, South Co. SLO Womenade.

Thank you SLO for the contributions your chapter makes to the communities you serve.

So why do I support our CSEA, Jennie asks herself?

It's been a learning curve for sure. I've been offered opportunities that I would not have imagined, throughout my "one hour a month." Professionally and personally, I have developed and grown/evolved. No doubt! However, it's the human element that is some times missed by many.

This human element is what drives me. Hearing the stories from members across California of receiving the assistance from CSEA. Participating in the passing of legislation for our students, and our communities. Knowing I have a voice and learning how to use it is empowering in advocacy beyond the walls of working in "schools".

As I woke up this morning reading about the wrath of nature, I knew that those members have a way to reach out for assistance. Waking up to a text, asking if my family and I were okay, that's the best feeling ever!

Continued on page 8

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN YOUR CHAPTERS?

Continued from page 7



The golden part of CSEA? CSEA is truly a California school employee association. We the classified do not pay out dues to a corporation, we create our board and hire our employees holding accountability and recourse for our members.

IYKYK-thanks for calling me a trouble maker.

I know the shoulders I stand on, and the responsibility to find the new leaders.

FB post: December 15, 2024, reprinted with permission.

Donate to the CSEA Assistance Fund

Support for the CSEA Assistance Fund doesn't come from union dues—it relies solely on donations from our CSEA family. If you've already made a donation, thank you for your generosity. If not, please consider how much your contribution will be appreciated by those members in need.

[More Info](#)

FREE TRAINING TO SUPPORT STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

SAFE SPACES

Classified employees fill unique roles on school campuses across California. Those roles go far beyond job descriptions. With the wide variety of ways classified employees can interact with and get to know students, they also take on the mantle of confidant and protector.

Making California's schools safe and supportive environments is at the core of what CSEA siblings do on a daily basis. Core Values such as inclusivity are not limited to how we interact with union siblings. They're traits we embody in our communities and especially in our schools.

"The impact of a child feeling accepted, safe, and supported at school is vital to their success and survival," said Brittney Clark, member of Newman-Crows Landing Chapter 551, and winner of the 2024 William P. Schwartz Humanitarian Award. Brittney has long been an advocate for student mental health and creating safe spaces for students at her school site.

"Often, we could be the first or only person on a given day who takes an interest in a student to see how they're doing, to be a friendly face, or to offer one second of light. It's our job to make sure



we're informed and know how to create these safe environments, so we don't lose these kids."

To that end, the Office of the California Surgeon General has created a free training for anyone who works with children to learn more about supporting the mental health and well-being of students.

Safe Spaces: Foundations of Trauma-Informed Practice for Educational and Care Settings is a free, online, two-hour training designed to help understand and respond to trauma in young people.

It is available in English and Spanish, with modules for those who work with children in the 0-5, 5-11, and 12-18 age ranges.

Safe Spaces is skill-based and gives tangible ways to help students experiencing and overactivated stress response. To learn more, visit the Office of the California Surgeon General [Safe Spaces web page](#).

Note: Click on the above links to find the training module for you.

Ref.: CSEA website dated Aug. 16, 2024

MEMBERS MATTER

*By Katie Andersen, COE Committee Chair
with input from the ICOE 614 E-Board*

Meet the newly elected E-Board Imperial County Office of Education Chapter 614. (Pictured on the right.)

Arlene Mercado - President
Alberto Vazquez - Vice President
Rachel Machado - Secretary
Laura Aguilar - Treasurer
Beatriz Gonzalez - Communications Officer

When ICOE Chapter 614 fell under administratorship and new leaders were needed to take on the task of rebuilding the chapter, and the trust of its members.

The newly elected leaders shared with us what they learned while participating in the administratorship process and what they are doing to strengthen the membership of ICOE Chapter 614.

Why was the chapter under administratorship?

Administratorship is a process where CSEA steps in to provide direct guidance and oversight to a chapter facing operational challenges. Our chapter entered administratorship to address areas that needed stronger governance, improved structure, and more effective processes to serve our members better. The ultimate goal is to rebuild the chapter's foundation. The decision to place a chapter under administratorship is made by CSEA's Board of Directors.



Members of the e-board greet new chapter members at the holiday Posada in December of 2024.



What are the steps the chapter must complete before they are no longer under administratorship?

Our chapter must show progress in a few important areas to get out of administratorship. Some of these areas are keeping our finances in order, having regular meetings, improving communication, and rebuilding trust with our members. CSEA has given us a clear plan to follow, and we are working hard to meet these goals.

What advice can you give other chapter leaders after going through this process?

Transparency and effective communication are essential, not only with our members but also with CSEA. Regularly reviewing our bylaws, maintaining financial accountability, and fostering open dialogue are critical practices that should involve our members and CSEA. Consistency in these efforts is key to building and sustaining a strong, united chapter. Additionally, utilizing the training and support provided by CSEA will help us grow and strengthen our chapter. As members, it's important to recognize that when you start noticing less involvement or communication from CSEA, that's your signal to speak up and ensure our chapter stays connected and aligned with their support and guidance.

MEMBERS MATTER (CONTINUED FROM PG. 10)

How has your chapter been supported by CSEA in this process?

CSEA has provided exceptional support through a dedicated administrator, training, and resources that have been crucial to our progress. Their availability and guidance have been instrumental to our success.

How has your chapter adapted to new changes in leadership? How were those leaders chosen?

Chapter 614's leaders were selected through a collaborative effort involving our administrator, LRRs, and volunteers who stepped forward. It was our administrator, Maria Elena Perdomo, who recognized our potential and guided us to where we are today.

We understand that our members are still adjusting to this new leadership, and we recognize that building trust and confidence takes time. As leaders, we are still learning and growing in these roles but remain committed to demonstrating meaningful change and progress. Our hope is that our members see and feel the dedication we bring to this transformation, knowing that together, we can build a brighter future for Chapter 614.

ICOE E-board attended negotiations training, along with Chapter Administrator Maria Elena Perdomo and LRR Jesus Ferrer.



ICOE E-Board prepares to host the CSEA Board Of Directors with a trip to Costco for snacks for all meeting attendees. ICOE was officially released from administratorship at the January 18, 2025 BOD meeting.



Chapter leaders and members celebrated the holidays during the annual Posada in December.

What are your chapter's goals for the future?

Our primary goals are to increase member participation transparency always, improve communication among our members, and create a sustainable structure for the future of Chapter 614. We also aim to open the door for potential leaders and build confidence in our members about the leaders who represent them. Ultimately, we strive to be a model chapter that others can look to for inspiration.

Anything positive feedback you want to share that evolved from this experience?

Although many of us didn't know each other despite working at ICOE for years, this experience has brought together diverse perspectives and helped us learn from one another. It has strengthened our resilience, deepened our commitment to members, and reminded us of the power of unity and CSEA's vital support.

What inspired you to be leaders?

Our decision to step into these leadership roles stems from making meaningful changes following our experience, not only did our administrator see our potential but encouraged us to take on these roles, which inspired us to work as a team. Although some of us didn't know each other well before, learning and growing together has united us. Being part of this leadership team has motivated us to focus on supporting our members and making a positive impact.



READ & LEARN



- **GIB 51-24; 2025 Member of the Year Awards**

2025 Member of the Year Awards nominations are now being accepted through the **March 1st deadline**. Please make members aware of the guidelines and procedures for handling nominations. The purpose of the CSEA Member of the Year Awards Program is to recognize the commitment and dedication of classified employees to the students of California, community involvement, and activism in our fine union.

Ref.: Leadership mail, dated 12/30/24

- **Lincoln's Birthday (Observed); Feb. 10, 2025**

All CSEA offices closed.

- **President's Day; Feb. 17, 2025**

All CSEA offices closed.

Find the right training for
you and your chapter

[https://csea.com/events-
and-training/upcoming](https://csea.com/events-and-training/upcoming)

COE COMMITTEE OPEN HOUSE **RSVP Here to receive the zoom link**

March 5 @ 7 p.m.

Topic: Charter Schools

Reminder: Register for Officer Skills Training

We are pleased to announce that Officer Skills Training registration is now open for members who are currently serving as chapter Officers for 2025.

REGISTER NOW

For questions, please email the ME/SD Department at training@csea.com

February 1, 2025

Virtual

February 8, 2025

Virtual

February 22, 2025

Virtual

March 1, 2025

Virtual

In-Person OST Events

February 22, 2025 – South

McBride High School
7025 Parkcrest St.
Long Beach, CA, 90808

March 8, 2025 – North

CSEA Headquarters
2045 Lundy Ave.
San Jose, CA, 95131

Ref.: CSEA website



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, Katie Andersen, CSEA Communications

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

Upcoming Committee Meetings

Feb. 5, 2025

March 5, 2025 - Virtual Open House

April 25-27, Sacramento GR Office